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# HEAVEN

SERMONS BY  
HARD MONTAGUE

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Memorials

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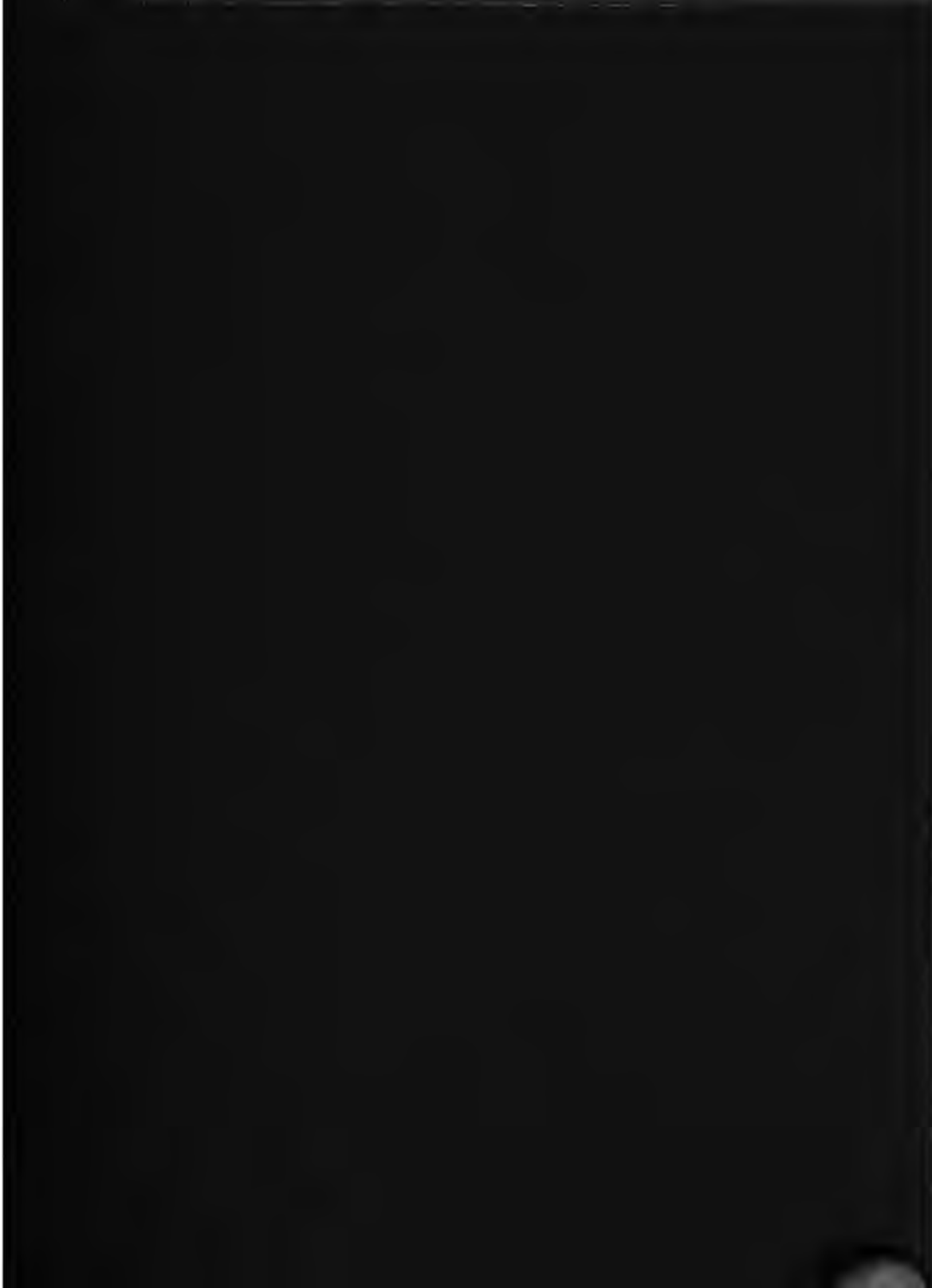
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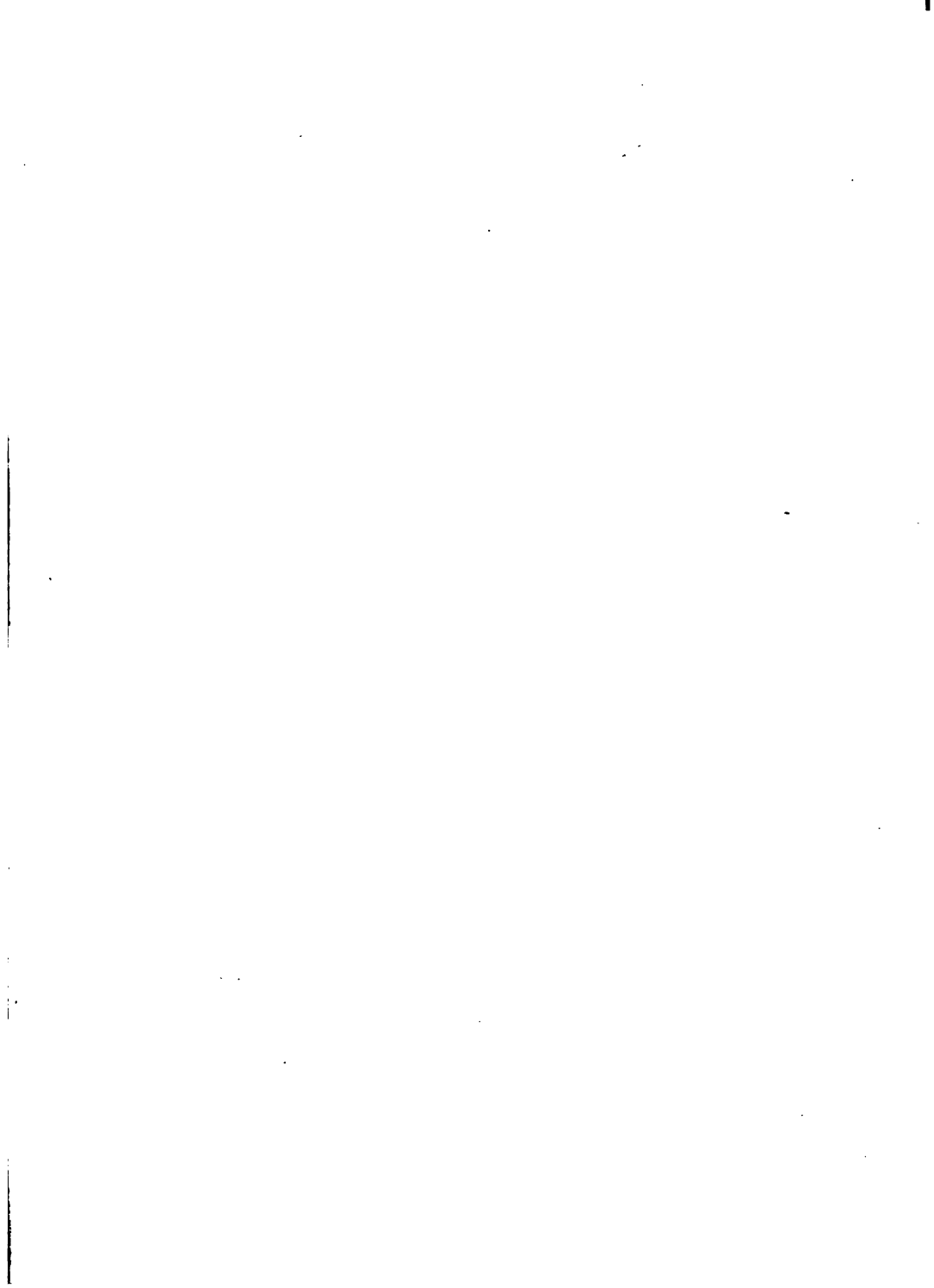
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION.

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Received 22 June, 1896.















*Richard Montague*

# THE AVENUE

SERIES

REV. ROBERT D. MONTAGUE, D.D.

With Memorials

REV. GEORGE D. LEE, D.D.

AND

CLY. ALVAH HONEY, D.D.



SILVER, BURDETT AND GUMMERY

BOSTON . . . NEW YORK . . . CHICAGO

1896.



John F. Tigue

○

# HEAVEN

*Six Sermons*

BY

REV. RICHARD MONTAGUE, D.D.

*With Memorials*

BY

*Amends*  
REV. GEORGE E. MERRILL, D.D.

AND

REV. ALVAH HOVEY, D.D., LL.D.



♣

SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY,

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RICHARD MONTAGUE.

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**A Memorial.**

By REV. GEORGE E. MERRILL, D.D.





## RICHARD MONTAGUE.

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### A MEMORIAL.

**W**HEN, in the hush that falls upon a completed life, the spirit of a just man is made perfect, it is hard to turn back from our gazing into heaven to trace again the earthly way by which that soul came to the heights of its transfiguration. But love demands again the old familiar paths, and it is found that the footprints in the vanishing dust are the very least that remains to guide men as they tread where their companion has trod. Everywhere the air is scintillant with gleaming inspirations. The atmosphere is laden with the aroma of holiness. Men and women and children arise to call him blessed. The lamp that he kindled for his own way has given its flame to a thousand others. The words he spoke are yet echoing in many lives. And when we turn to look

heavenward again, a smile is upon our lips. Now, as a preface to his own words concerning HEAVEN, we briefly trace the rarely beautiful and brilliant career of this man of God. He was good, and true, and strong. He was brave to lead, heroic to suffer and endure. He was a man of piety, of deep spiritual experience and knowledge, anointed to preach the gospel of Christ. His native gifts and his rich culture, his clear thought and eloquent utterance, and the Providence which called him to positions of large trust, made him a minister whose service exalted him, and whose successful, though brief, life was a shining light to all who knew him. The crown of life that he has won sheds its radiance over the way of life by which he reached the goal.

RICHARD MONTAGUE was born in Westboro', Mass., July 4, 1853, the third child of Uriel and Jane Stevens Montague. His father was the son of a Baptist minister, the Rev. Elijah Montague, but there were no other ministers in the direct line of his descent from the first Richard, who came to America prior to 1634. The name Richard in the family is traced back to the

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third generation from the founder of the English branch of the family, who came into England at the time of the Conquest, A. D., 1066. No definite records of the boyhood of Richard in Westboro' are preserved before the date of his own journals, the earliest of which is for the year 1868; but the little fellow is affectionately remembered by many of the towns-people, and the name of Dick Montague is often on their lips. He was at once of an unusually thoughtful and also active disposition. His father's means were not sufficient to surround his family with luxuries that so often enervate the children of the home, and Richard added to the usual sports and occupations of boyhood an enterprising business life, which he enjoyed and made a useful training for the future. Aiding his father in his hardware-store and about his book-keeping; caring daily for the horse; having charge of the room of the Young Men's Christian Association, he yet found time for other pursuits. He established a thriving business in popped corn, popping it himself and taking it to the factories, where he found an entrance denied to every one else. With a schoolmate he set

up a circulating library, the stock at first consisting of some of the better dime novels, and the patronage being chiefly from the school-boys; but gradually the library was improved and enlarged, and its patronage widened, until its dividends became of considerable value. His interest in the library continued until he left Westboro'. Another scheme successfully carried out was the formation of an amateur fire company called the Bucket Boys, the plan originating with Montague. An opportunity soon occurred to prove the valor of the Bucket Boys, and the Town Hall was saved from destruction by their prompt action. In recognition of this service the town provided a room for the company, and their equipment was largely increased by popular donation. All these activities were prophetic of the alertness and perseverance of his later life, and in all of them the seriousness of his purpose is evident. These schemes were not mere play, but every one had its utility. It should not be understood, however, that he had not the lighter and fun-loving side of character usually to be seen in boys. No boy ever had more of it. He was a leader in sports. He had a keen sense of the

ridiculous, and a wit that enlivened everything he did. This was a conspicuous characteristic of him all through life, never transgressing the bounds of a refined taste, and never sacrificing principle to a joke; but ever lighting up the lives of those around him with cheer. Even in his last illness his pain was mitigated by mirthfulness, and the attendants at his bedside wondered at his fun.

In school Richard was more than ordinarily successful, and especially won distinction as a declaimer. At the age of sixteen he entered Wilbraham Academy, and he remained there a year and a half, a period of great importance in his intellectual and spiritual career. His diary records his interest in his studies, and the growing depth of his religious feeling. He was constant in attendance at prayer-meetings, and under date of October 19, 1869, he writes: "I went to prayer-meeting in the Reading Room in the evening. Arose for prayers. Have made up my mind to try and obtain religion." The desire was sincere, and the effort serious and earnest; but a few days passed before he could write: "My mind is made up. I have sought God's forgiveness and have received it."

Henceforth it is my desire to live in a manner becoming a disciple of Christ, and, God helping me, I will do so." The next day he says: "All day I have felt a sense of duty begun to be performed, and a relieved mind. I hope that I may receive still more light." It was the entrance upon a path of brightness that shone more and more unto the perfect day. There were some clouds,—perfect light was not granted at once; again and again doubts assailed him; even at the time of his baptism he wrote: "My mind was in such a state that I did not gain that blessing which I desired, though I felt I was doing God's command;" and for many days afterward he suffered doubts as to his conversion, "by means of which, I suppose, the devil is endeavoring to make me give up trying to serve God." His feelings were remembered clearly in after life, and during his pastorate in Providence he wrote to Dr. Howard, pastor of the Congregational Church in Wilbraham: "My experience in Wilbraham was peculiarly happy and sad. God led me through spiritual struggles both before and after my conversion, especially after it, that I can never forget. In that period of religious

despair, which ensues after conversion in some minds, I was in large measure kept from all loss of hope and ambition by your ministrations. Few boys of sixteen, I fancy, are more thoroughly tried than was I during the very period to which you refer, when I was in your meetings." The letter shows not only the trouble of his own soul, but the wisdom of the devoted minister who guided him through the storm. Dr. Howard wrote to Dr. Flanders, then pastor of the Baptist Church in Westboro', and the latter baptized the new convert on Sunday, December 5, 1869.

Even at this time Richard cherished the thought of entering the ministry. The same letter which has just been quoted says: "I was aware of your conviction of my fitness for the work, and though my plans developed gradually, the ministry was always ahead of me after leaving Wilbraham as a more than possible life work." Well might the thought have entered other minds than his, for already he was taking frequent part in religious meetings, and the general feeling was expressed by one who said: "I like to hear that silver-haired boy speak." He was already set apart by God.



In the fall of 1870 he entered the senior class at Phillips Academy, Exeter, N. H., as a further preparation for the course at college which his ambition desired. At Exeter he secured the Bancroft scholarship. He remained only one year in this school, and entered Harvard University in 1871, completing the regular course of undergraduate studies in 1875, and graduating with honors. He spent a year in Cambridge studying and teaching, and in the fall of 1876 entered the Harvard Divinity School for one year, from which he passed to the Newton Theological Institution for the completion of his theological training, graduating in 1879. His course at Harvard was one of marked success, and the year in the Divinity School at Cambridge, which he sought especially for the study of Textual Criticism and Exegesis in the department of Prof. Ezra Abbot, was one of great enjoyment. Dr. Abbot wrote at its close: "I have formed a very high opinion of his scholarship, his intellectual ability, and of his Christian character." His studies at Newton were of an equally high quality, leaving impressions which suggested at a later day an invitation to a

teacher's place in the Institution. On Oct. 1, 1879, he was licensed to preach by his church in Westboro.'

At the close of his course of theological study he was invited almost simultaneously by the First Baptist Church of Lawrence, Mass., and the Central Baptist Church of Providence, R. I., to the pastorate. During an absence of Dr. Pidge, who had been the minister of the church in Lawrence, Mr. Montague had preached there frequently, and the people had already formed a strong attachment for him. Possibly this circumstance, and his own conviction that it would be wise to begin his ministry with the acquirement of experience in a smaller parish, together with the advice of the lady to whom he was soon to be married, inclined his choice to Lawrence, and the call of that church was accepted. He was ordained to the Christian Ministry in Lawrence on Friday, Oct. 3, 1879, President Alvah Hovey, D. D., Prof. Heman Lincoln, D. D., and Rev. B. A. Greene, D. D., participating in the service. His work in Lawrence opened auspiciously, and the affection and respect of his people were given to him from the first. His mar-

riage to Miss Martha P. Cogswell of Cambridgeport occurred on May 20, 1880, and his wife became at once an eager and beloved helper in all the work which the women of the church were doing. She was easily a leader, and yet her tact and gentleness of spirit avoided many of the dangers to which leadership is liable, and her success in such work as naturally falls to a minister's wife was unqualified. Probably few pastorates of such short duration have resulted in binding the church and the pastor and his wife more firmly together than in this instance. It was with profound regret that Mr. Montague's resignation was received in July, 1881, hardly more than a year and a half from the commencement of his work. But the reasons for the step now taken were cogent, and the church acquiesced in his decision, with such expressions of sorrow as rendered his departure the more difficult. He had been called again to the pulpit of the Central Church of Providence, and the pressure of indebtedness which he had incurred by his education, combined with the evident claims of the larger field in Providence, made the path of duty clear. The year and a half

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in Lawrence had resulted in the quickening of the church and the addition of ten converts to its membership ; while in every good work in the city he had an active part which won for him the esteem of all the people. Many tender remembrances of him are yet recalled, and the impressions made by his "sweetness of character, purity of life, earnestness of labor, devotedness of purpose, the clearness and power of his pulpit discourse with its richness of Scriptural expression," words from the resolutions at the time of his resignation, remain vivid in many hearts to-day. One habit of the young minister may illustrate many characteristics that did not fail to affect the hearts of those to whom he ministered. It was generally understood that he wished to go from his study to the pulpit with a prayer upon his lips, without a break by the ordinary salutations of those whom he might meet ; and it was felt that his preaching gained an additional power from this undisturbed spirit of devotion. It was remembered as a fitting close of such a ministry, that during the last service of baptism, when the eastern window above the baptistery was partly open, a white

dove alighted upon the top of the window and rested there quietly. It seemed to many to be symbolic of the divine presence and blessing.

The pastorate in Providence was begun in September, 1881, and continued until March 16, 1887. Mr. Montague became almost at once a conspicuous preacher in Providence. Large congregations flocked to his ministry. During the year 1882, the meeting-house was renovated and improved, and greater facilities secured for work. Early in the same year Rev. Wm. F. Armstrong, a returned missionary, was employed by the generosity of Deacon J. C. Hartshorn to assist the pastor in missionary work, and for more than two years he did efficient service, until, in the fall of 1884, he returned to the foreign field. Before he relinquished his work, however, in the spring of 1884, the Rev. George C. Needham conducted a series of revival meetings, and a harvest was gathered. Mr. Montague's skill in organizing and directing the work of the church through these co-laborers, as well as during the whole course of this pastorate, was marked. The training gained in the activities of boyhood now bore its fruit in

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manhood, and his wise ordering of the opportunities and powers of his large church was very noteworthy. With all this labor his preaching was not diminished in quality, and his utterances became daily more forcible, winning the favor of the people. His fine culture was no bar to spiritual power, and it was proved that God could use the polished weapon as well as rougher tools. Many were converted, and during his pastorate one hundred and eighteen persons were added to the church upon conversion. But under the severe strain upon his strength Mr. Montague found his health failing, and during the last year of his pastorate he was obliged to relinquish his duties at times, and was finally directed by his physicians to leave New England and to discontinue preaching altogether for at least a year. On September 10, 1886, he presented his resignation to the church; but it was not accepted. In the assured love of his people, and with the most substantial proofs of their desires and hopes for his restoration to health, he was sent to Colorado Springs, with his wife and little son, that he might secure, if possible, the physical recuperation

that would enable him to go on with his work. It was only six months later, in March, 1887, upon his announcement that a resumption of the pastoral duties in New England would be impossible, that his people reluctantly accepted his resignation, with renewed evidences of their affection and care. His last year of active service in Providence was marked by his appointment as one of the five clergymen, chosen for the first time in that year, to act as preachers to Harvard University. But his failing health precluded active service, and he never preached at the University under this appointment. He had also been invited to the chair of New Testament Interpretation in the Newton Theological Institution, but he had declined, feeling that his work in the pulpit should not cease.

Arriving in Colorado Springs Mr. Montague and his family were received into the home of his friend, the pastor of the Baptist Church in that place, and remained there during several months. Rest and moderate exercise in the open air gave an opportunity for the wonderful climate of Colorado to produce its almost unvarying effects upon those threatened with

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pulmonary disease. Daily his strength grew greater. From the first he became cognizant of the nature and needs of the work of his friend in the pastorate of the church, and his counsels were often sought and given. When at last his friend laid down his office it was with the welcome knowledge that Mr. Montague would be invited to assume it at once. On April 18, 1887, a call to the pastorate being deferred at his own desire, he assumed the supply of the pulpit for three months. Already he had become one of the congregation, and had drawn all who knew him to an affectionate friendship by his genial disposition and fine spirit. New life and hope sprang up at once. A call to the pastorate, June 22, 1887, was wisely met by certain stimulating conditions, and though these were accepted in July, it was not until October of that year that he finally accepted the call, and entered upon the full duties of the office. A parsonage was soon erected at an expense of \$5000, of which Mr. Montague secured \$2000 by appeals to Eastern friends, and in August, 1889, at the pastor's instance, the society proceeded to the erection of a commodious and beautiful house



of worship, at a cost of \$42,000. This seemed to be an imperious necessity. The town was growing more rapidly than at any time in its history, the population doubling in two years. The old meeting-house, uninviting and ill-arranged, would seat not more than one hundred and twenty-five people. Mr. Montague's preaching was attracting great interest. The church, therefore, was ready to attempt what would have been wholly impossible a year previous, and even now seemed a Herculean task. But their pastor seemed to know no fear. His indefatigable efforts succeeded in securing a further large sum from the East, the society itself was led to most generous efforts, and the edifice was carried to completion and dedicated Oct. 25, 1891, with an indebtedness of hardly more than a third of its value. It was a marked success of devoted effort, and pastor and people rejoiced together. The whole pastorate of Mr. Montague was characterized by the same strong leadership which was evidenced in the building of this fine edifice. Nor did such care for the material interests of the church impair at all the spiritual ministry. During the six

years the membership increased from one hundred and twenty-five to three hundred and forty-eight. The church gave to him its heartiest coöperation, and recognizing his physical weakness, secured the efficient assistance for nearly two years of Rev. F. W. Hart. Mr. Hart writes : —

“I believe that one trait of his character, his Christian hospitality, explains as much as any other his remarkable success in that sanitarian town. When I came to him, a total stranger, he took me in, and for five years, with the exception of a short interval, I lived in his home. There were many whose first acquaintance was formed as mine had been, and it is not surprising that they loved him, and when restored to health followed him wherever he might lead in the work of the church.”

Mr. Hart adds a feature of his life in the West, which was continued almost up to the day of his death : —

“The most remarkable thing was the fact that he continued to study and preach like a well man even after he was so frail that the shortest walk would produce such violent coughing that he could not proceed. He used to derive much comfort from the lives of such men as Robert Hall, who labored on amid great physical infirmities.”

A great sorrow fell upon Mr. Montague while he was in Colorado Springs. His wife after a brief illness died in October, 1890. She who had long and anxiously watched over him in his failing strength, now passed away from his side, the first to go into the world that knows no sickness and no pain. Her unusual adaptation to the position of a minister's wife, endearing her to the people, made her loss to the church a severe one; but in the circle of the home the blow was of unusual force, for not only were the affections torn as always in such bereavements, but the one who was left was pitiably unable to go on alone. He arose to his task with heroism, however, and his two little children found no lack of affectionate care, in which he was aided by the ever ready hearts and hands of his wife's noble family. A small volume of sermons, entitled *Chancel Sermons*, privately printed by request of the Ladies' Aid Society, was lovingly dedicated to his wife's memory.

Mr. Montague's influence in Colorado was not confined to his church. In the city he became known as a power for good in many public matters, and his voice was frequently

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heard in the pulpits of Denver and upon collegiate platforms; and in the summer of 1890 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the State University at Boulder.

It was becoming evident to all his friends that his strength was gradually failing, and no surprise would have been felt if he had relinquished at any time the responsibilities resting upon him. But it was a surprise to his church and the community, when he resigned his charge, in October, 1893, to accept an invitation to the large church at Newton Centre, Mass. It soon became known, however, that his long residence in such a weak condition in a region so elevated had produced an incipient trouble of the heart, and his physicians warned him that removal to a lower level was imperative. Many years before he had been invited to the pastorate of the same church in Newton Centre, but now his duty seemed so clear that he could not decline. Before his departure for the East it was his good fortune to have met Miss Mabel Swett, in whom he found one who could rebuild his domestic joys, and they were married Septem-

ber 11, 1893. No greater boon could have been bestowed upon him by a loving Providence, and the short remainder of his life was blessed by the perfect devotion of his wife.

Dr. Montague began his work in Newton Centre, November 1, 1893. He was received by his people with enthusiasm, and he found in them all that he could desire as affording a congenial fellowship for service. His culture fitted him to minister to the most intellectual of his audience in this educational centre, while his practical skill in leadership made him bold enough to depart from traditions, when it seemed necessary, and to adopt methods of effective value. His ministry won all hearts, and twenty-five persons, among them all the members of his own family, were baptized. The esteem in which he was held in Newton Centre is so fully expressed in the address by President Hovey of the Theological Institution, which finds place in this volume, that this brief memoir leaves unattempted any additional estimate of his success in this his last pastorate, and passes at once to the closing scenes of his life.

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On the twenty-second day of May, 1895, he wrote to his classmates, who were to hold a class-meeting in connection with the Commencement of the Theological Institution: "I am too weak to be with you to-day in the body, but my spirit is with you, and in rejoicings, praises, and prayer I unite with you. My active work is finished. I resign my pastorate in a few days. I await the earthly future, be it longer or shorter, with serene confidence in the Divine Paternity; and the heavenly future is to me but one step onward in a path of glory even now begun." He had already been confined to his room during several weeks. Gradually his strength had failed. A long rest in the early spring had been necessary, from which he returned with elastic hope that he could go on with his work. But one Sunday in the pulpit convinced him that the attempt was futile. He retained for a few weeks the care of the pulpit though he did not preach, but on May 24 he wrote his resignation, and laid down his cherished work on earth forever. "When I began my pastorate here," he wrote, "I confidently expected at least five years of work; I hoped for ten. But

God wills otherwise." He desired his resignation to have effect July 18th, but this the loving and generous church would not allow. It was voted unanimously, first, that the church declines to accept the resignation of the pastor; second, that the pastor be relieved of all work and responsibility; third, that the pastor's salary be continued in full. These brief words, worthy of the noble church that uttered them, were accompanied by such expressions of love and confidence and sympathy, that his heart was greatly cheered. The appreciation of his work cast bright rays of sunshine over the last steps of his pathway. "Our pastor's sermons have been to us clear and refreshing streams from the Fountain of Life, and we fervently pray that his own spirit may continue to be strong in the Lord. Our pastor's life among us has been a noble lesson of patience and courage, doing us good when he knew it not, and we humbly ask the Father of mercies that it may be prolonged for our sakes. But whether his days are to be many or few we tender him hearty thanks for true service in the past, loving sympathy in the present, and loyal hope in the Lord for all

that is highest and best in the future." These words, addressed to him while living, and not deferred until his eye could not read them or his heart warm beneath their affection, were a crowning blessing. He received them with grateful acquiescence and calmly awaited the end.

On the first Sunday in July a little company gathered in the room of sickness to celebrate what all felt would be the last Communion. His church at the same hour was engaged in the same holy service, and by their appointment one of the Deacons, Mr. Gustavus Forbes, and the Rev. George Bullen, D. D., were asked to bear the bread and wine to the pastor's bedside, that he might share with them once more the sacred feast. The invalid, his wife, and his son Richard, his friend who had seen so much of his life in Colorado as well as in New England, and the two brethren named, formed the little group. Dr. Bullen led in the service, in which, however, it was felt that the dying pastor was the real leader. At its close Dr. Montague himself requested the singing of the hymn

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,"



after which he asked all to unite in repeating the Lord's Prayer. It was an hour never to be forgotten, filled with the tenderness and sweetness of Christian faith, resignation, and hope.

A few weeks of suffering and heroic fortitude remained. "The pain is getting to be very tedious," he said to his friend. It was no longer possible to divert the mind, as in the weeks immediately preceding, when the close study of Chaucer's poems, "just for fun," kept him many days, and the critical examination of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians gave him harder work and keener delight. Now it was all patient waiting, the soul irradiated with the heavenly light, the mind dwelling with joyous anticipation on the coming glory and often eager to be gone, until on Wednesday, the 27th of July, the end of earth was reached and the heavenly fields were gladdened by his presence. The glory of the eternal life had long been hidden only by a breath. The breath ceased and the world upon the other side of it was revealed.

The funeral rites were held in the meeting-house, where he had preached so often, on

Saturday morning, Professor George Bullen, D. D., President Alvah Hovey, D. D., Rev. George E. Merrill, D. D., and Rev. Robert Cameron, taking part in the service; and then the wasted body was borne to Westboro', Massachusetts, to be interred in the midst of the scenes of his childhood and amid the graves of his dear ones who had gone before.

The sermons in this volume are upon HEAVEN. Their publication is an appropriate close to his ministry. It is as if his voice came back to us out of the great Silence. What greater revelations may have come to him we cannot know; but to souls that yet stand waiting upon the hither side of the unseen world these interpretations of what is revealed of that world will be as welcome as the living utterances of the young preacher always were. Once more the heart will tremble as he speaks, and the message, which seems to be not only of the other world but from it, will prove a "savour from life unto life" to him who hears.



I.

WHAT IS HEAVEN?



## I.

### WHAT IS HEAVEN?

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see  
God.* — MATTHEW v. 8.

WHAT is Heaven? Whiteness of soul. What is Heaven? The vision of God. The abiding of a pure and gracious God in a clean and loving heart; that is Heaven. The essence of the heavenly state is given in this familiar beatitude: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

To see God everywhere, in nature, in the plan of our lives, in the movements of history, in the person of his Son; to be so assured of his nearness that we never fear since he is our protector, we never are anxious for he provides, life is

good for it is God's gift, and death has no terror for it takes us one step nearer our Lord; in every duty of daily life to see and rejoice in an opportunity of service in God's Kingdom; to know no distinction of secular life and religious life, to view all life as life for God; to be conscious of the Celestial Presence in every trifle as in every crisis of our days; to know, to feel, to see God, here and hereafter, now and always, is the essence of Heaven. It is not only happiness: it is the sum of all happiness. Other loves are the reflected rays of God's love. Other joys are but symbols of this one great joy. The central joy of Heaven is the seen presence of God. The consummation of salvation is that beatific vision in which we see as we are seen, know as we are known, and God is all in all.

It is a moral perception, and, in the very nature of it, rests on spiritual con-

ditions. No soul without a love of harmony will enjoy Beethoven's Mass in D. No one indifferent to form and color will long pause over Raphael's Transfiguration. St. Peter's dome will awaken but a momentary delight in him who has no architectural sense. To see, there must be eyes to see. The very works that reveal our God to one veil him from another; the very mutations of life that exhibit his wisdom and grace to his children puzzle the children of the world. To see the pure, we must be pure; to see God, we must be God-like. Not only is Heaven the vision of God, but that vision is born of God.

Thus Heaven involves a specific, regenerated character. In its essential aspect it is character. Where is Heaven? Wherever God is, and with pure heart is seen. Where that purity is not, Heaven cannot be; where it is, Heaven must in



substance exist. Behind all queries as to whether Heaven is a place or a state, lies this evident truth, — Heaven is character. Primarily the question is not where, nor how a man is, but who he is, if we would know if he is or is to be in Heaven. Without holiness no man shall see God.

In the light of these truths emerge some principles worth our noting.

#### I. HEAVEN MAY BEGIN IN THIS LIFE.

The beatitude of our text does not refer solely to the far-off beatific vision when salvation's work is wholly completed in the redeemed. It starts in the present, and roots itself in the here. God is now visible; purity is now possible; Heaven is now attainable.

In reading the New Testament, and especially the parables, much perplexity and obscurity can be avoided by a cor-

rect apprehension of the meaning of the phrases which occur over and over again: "the Kingdom of Heaven," "the Kingdom of God." Some have endeavored to distinguish them; some have said that they refer to the church; others have said that they denote the government by our Lord after his return in glory; still others have seen in them descriptions of the final condition when Christ's mediatorial work is done and he surrenders all things again to the Father. But all these opinions are, I believe, either mechanical, partial, or unspiritual. The Kingdom of God is that kingdom in which God rules and is obeyed from the heart. The Kingdom of Heaven is that realm in which God is honored and obeyed by loyal souls just as he is honored and obeyed by those who, in celestial spaces, never cease to do his will.

Consider the majestic sweep of the

conception. Here is some lonely widow, poor and friendless, sewing, or knitting, or scrubbing in her cottage, conscious of her Saviour's presence, seeking to perform each day's duty as unto the Lord, and to bear each day's burden as one who is a pilgrim and a stranger; and though the monarchs of earth know or note it not, there the eye of faith beholds the Kingdom of God! Or here is the archangel Michael organizing the hosts of God's elect above for worship or ministry among the saints departed, or for service to the living heirs of salvation, and though we hear no clash of arms, nor movement of chariots, nor thunderings of clouds, nor blast of trumpets; though emperors, or kings, or presidents never give this mighty cohort a passing thought, yet there, in glory and splendor, radiant beyond all thrones and places of earthly sovereigns, is the Kingdom of

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Heaven. The humble widow and the archangel are thus at one, fellow-citizens of God's kingdom. Dutiful Abel offered the sacrifice commanded, and for his obedient faith was reckoned a citizen of this holy realm. Far-seeing Abraham, when God's voice spoke, left his native land not knowing whither he went, and led Isaac to the altar ignorant how God's promise was to be fulfilled, and was accounted just, and became a habitant of this eternal kingdom. Wherever, on earth, in Paradise, among men or amid angels, you find a created intelligence in which the fear of God rules, there you have the Kingdom of God. Whenever, in penitent Adam or in righteous Noah, in royal David or in prophetic Isaiah, among Jews or among Gentiles, before Christ or after Christ, in the far-away times of the past, or in the close, practical, every-day era of the now, you find a

soul loving and obeying God, then and there is the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the most magnificent conception ever held by the human mind! It annihilates space, and it leaps over all time; it gathers into a living and present unity all spirits who ever have accepted or ever may accept the sovereign rule of God in Christ.

A good many people will see little Heaven hereafter if they do not begin to look for more of Heaven now.

The trouble with not a few is that they so conceive of Heaven as distant, separate from present questions and duties, as to think that on death they are to take it all in bulk, and so they are getting very little of it while they live.

We desire, and are to have, a Heaven hereafter. Oh, yes! But to secure it, we need and we must have a Heaven now. Are you now in Heaven? No?

Then what hope have you of going to Heaven? Do you now see God? No? Then what promise have you of seeing him hereafter? Have you now some purity of heart? No? Then why do you hope to become pure even as he is pure? Are you wrangling in your earthly home? Then could you be harmonious in the home beyond the skies? Are you disputatious among the saints on earth? Then how will you keep the peace with the saints made perfect in the Jerusalem above? If you want to get into Heaven, see to it that here and now you get some Heaven into you.

## 2. DEGREES OF LIFE IN HEAVEN.

From what has been said, it is evident that there are degrees of life in Heaven. The vision we have of God will be proportionate to the purity of our souls. That explains why so many in the hum-

blest walks of life see so much more of God than do the wise and great of the world. Their hearts have not been soiled by the contamination of ambition and selfishness and display. The lenses of the soul are clearer and God can be better seen.

It is a traditional notion that death ushers even the merest babe in Christ, or the stingy believer, or the worldly communicant, straight into the heavenly bliss and glory. It is thought that when the earthly life ends, the consummated heavenly life begins. For one I can find in Scripture no trace of support for such a thought. I have vainly searched the works of our theologians for conclusive or weighty evidence of such a view. The analogies of life do not favor it, nor are the fruits which it produces in daily conduct an argument for it. What is commonly thought of as "Heaven" does

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not begin till our Lord comes again in glory when we shall receive our resurrection bodies, and shall obtain the salvation ready to be completed in the last day. Prior to that, in this world and in the next, the Kingdom of Heaven is a process.

A company of Christian people assemble for a common purpose, and each often has a foretaste of Heaven, but all are in various stages of Christian character and of heavenly grace. There is no reason nor Scripture for supposing that death works such a change that we are all by it reduced to a common level, be it high or low.

That to die is gain the Christian believer knows. That in Paradise, or between death and the second Advent, the believer comes into closer relations with his Lord, and so into added felicity, is indisputable. But the old teaching of



death and immediate glory is as truly without foundation as respects the believer, as it is without foundation in respect to the unforgiven sinner. There is abundant reason to believe that we enter the other world much as we leave this world. If we have been penurious, selfish, over-thrifty, unduly careful of the interests of self, we need not think that by a process of magic when the spirit leaves the body we are to become singularly generous, unselfish, and Christlike. We are, thank God, if truly the children of God, to become ultimately as our Lord, but it will not be, here or anywhere, by some easy-going, hocus-pocus process, but by the patient trial and discipline of our faith and love. Some disciples of Jesus are fanning into a glowing flame the fire kindled of God in their hearts. Some are intermittent, spasmodic, erratic in the performance of their

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Christian duties. Some are forgetting to pray, some have for months left their Bibles unread. Some are doing nothing to make others happy. Somehow before these are fit for Heaven, there must be more Heaven fitted into them.

O beloved, what are you doing to get more Heaven into your present life? What are you doing to give more Heaven to the forsaken, the poor, the aged, the tempted, the wandering, the sick, the hopeless, the lost? Did you ever think how much work must be done in our hearts and lives before we are fit to enter the final Heaven, and enjoy the beatific vision and be as pure as Christ?

And though in the last and finished state of heavenly glory we shall be altogether free from sin, altogether pure, we shall not all be alike, we shall not have ceased to grow. No painter yet has been able to portray the face of Christ.

Its riches of grace, tenderness, and holiness are untraceable. And so it will be in the final glory. God is infinite, grace is boundless, creation has no discovered limits; there will in that Heaven be so much to learn, to think, to feel, to love, to discover, to achieve, to be — the infinite operations and attributes of an infinite God to investigate — that we can never stop. Across the boundless ocean of divine mercy will come the refrain, sung by angels and saints redeemed, “No shore; no shore!”

### 3. NO LIMIT TO THE SATISFACTIONS OF HEAVEN.

I have already anticipated my closing thought. There is no limit to the satisfactions of Heaven. That is just as true in this life, as after this life. Jesus said to the woman at the well, “He that drinketh of the water that I shall give

him shall never thirst." That is, "In me and in the new life which I give he shall have a perennial source of inward supply for all his heart's desires."

We tire of earthly scenes. To most men it is a disappointment to go back, after many years, to one's early home. The many changes awaken pain. Ordinary books cease to inspire us as at first they did. We crave new scenes, friends, ideas, work. Immortality is the natural crown of present life. But even that must be progressive. I rejoice that in Heaven there is to be no end of supply for every true soul want.

You know perhaps how it is in music. You learn a phrase of two or three notes. You discover how it is wrought into a prolonged melody. Then some one tells you how by fixed laws its corresponding parts are worked out, and thus a true harmony is produced. Step by step as

your musical culture progresses you see a sonata, a symphony, a mass, an oratorio, with all its variety in unity wrought out into a perfect whole. And perhaps at last you have mastered the analysis of one of Bach's great fugues. You see theme chasing theme, harmony interblending with harmony, the utmost seeming disorder fused into the utmost real order, an almost infinitely intricate mass of detail blended into a perfect and intelligible unity, and you stand amazed that that little theme of perhaps but three notes could by an orderly and describable law of development yield that triumphant organ pæan. It is to be thus, I judge, in our vision of God. We do see him here, if by his grace his Spirit is within us to cleanse, so that with the Spirit's eye, as it were, we look out on nature and life. But how little of him we behold! An old divine said that as we ate

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we should thank God for the manna that came down from heaven; as we drank we should remember the precious water of life; and as we walked we should be reminded of the walk worthy of the gospel. In silver and gold is the contrast to the precious blood whereby our redemption was purchased. In the mountains is God's throne; in the skies God's chariot; in the lightnings God's arrows; in the thunders his voice. There is no circumstance, nor scene, nor experience which does not correspond with some work or power or attribute of God.

As the heart grows purer, and vision grows clearer, how increased on every hand are the signs of the divine presence,—until all the varied experiences through which we pass, all the countless phenomena on which we gaze, are but the combinations of two themes, "God is Love," "God is Light," which

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unite again in that single note, GOD IS FATHER.

Thus I have sought to show that Heaven is more than endless felicity after death. It is God in the soul here, now, and forever. What is Heaven? It is holiness. What is Heaven? It is to see God. The vision of a holy God by a holy soul, that is Heaven.

He who is brought into living union with God now will have no fear for the future. He will have no concern about death. It can only take him nearer to him who even here is his life and joy.

Then let our souls, on wings sublime,  
Rise from the vanities of time,  
Draw back the parting veil and see  
The glories of eternity.

. . . . .  
Shall aught beguile us on the road,  
While we are travelling back to God?  
For strangers into life we come,  
And dying is but going home.

. . . . .

To dwell with God, to feel his love,  
Is the full Heaven enjoyed above ;  
And the sweet expectation now  
Is the young dawn of Heaven below.





## II.

### RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN.



## II.

### RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN.

*Love never faileth.*— I COR. xiii. 8.

THE apostle is looking forward, and in the light of eternity is estimating the gifts and graces of the church. Gifts, such as prophecies, tongues, miracles, and all the varied equipment by which the kingdom of God is extended on earth, shall pass away. There will be no need of them when they have done their work. The staging can be taken down when the fresco is done. But graces will never pass away. Faith, hope, love, these are to abide. And with particular emphasis may it be said of that grace which is the crown of all graces in God's kingdom,—“Love never faileth.”

In this truth is involved the answer to a question nowhere directly answered in Scripture, but ever prominent in Christian thought: "Shall we recognize loved ones in Heaven?" There are problems which logic or philosophy cannot solve, but which affection practically settles. I believe that there are specific intimations in Revelation which give us rational grounds for hoping to meet in a future life our loved ones who have fallen asleep in the Lord. But even did no such detailed intimations exist, I should feel justified in cherishing such a hope on the basis of a declaration such as our text contains. The instincts and behests of love are the deepest of our nature. None cry out so loudly for satisfaction, none crowd so closely upon David's inspired words: "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Given affinity, and, by a law of life, if energy endures, after sufficient mutation,

there will be relationship. The moral and spiritual world as truly tends to equilibrium as does the material and psychical world.

It is to be noted just what Paul means by "love." It is not animal desire, mere fancy, nor liking. It is not domestic fondness, that sweet manifestation of affection, which, pure and holy as it is when transfigured by Christian faith, is yet in great degree grounded in our present earthly and bodily conditions. It is a strict spiritual affinity. It is an attachment based on character, actual or latent. It is a loyalty to God or Christ, growing out of the perceived glory of the divine nature. Or it is a self-giving movement of one soul toward another soul or other souls, awakened by the recognition of moral and spiritual worth. Only on such a basis as this have we any reason to expect recognition in Heaven. For it is character,

and all that it involves in Christ, that is the essential content of Heaven.

Emerson has thrown more light on the higher and lower, as well as the progressive manifestations of "love," than any uninspired writer I recall. Read his essay, "Love," and verify my statement. With that charm of word and thought so peculiar to himself he takes us along from the fancies and passions of early years into the slowly ripening affections of the spirit, and shows us how as the first disappear, the others abide, and love, — celestial, holy, spiritual, out-going, self-giving, God-like "love never faileth."

There is nothing more beautiful to me than a young man and young woman just starting out on the untried pathway of a married life. If Christ be in that new home, its law and life, I know not where to turn, as the years go on, for sweeter glimpses and foretastes of Heaven. Some

mountebank comes to town and advertises to tell married people how to get along without quarrelling. You do not need to pay the charlatan a dollar to learn that, precious beyond gold as the knowledge is. You may know without a fee. Get a right view of the highest ends of marriage. Fix it in your mind that by God's law and by your marriage vow you are bound to each other, until death shall part. Your wife, O man, is not merely to mend your clothes, cook your victuals, keep your house, rear your children ! Your husband, O woman, is not merely to give you protection, furnish home, give support, or indulge your tastes. You are of twain made one, that you may *be* one. There is perfect truth in Tennyson's lines: —

“Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;  
The man be more of woman, she of man ;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height ;

. . . . .



“ She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,  
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind,  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words.”

In a true Christian marriage there is a growing respect for each companion, a growing recognition of the higher ends of marriage, and an increasing perception how all its ministries may serve to strengthen these great spiritual ends. There is no school for character like the Christian family. And the one key to domestic harmony is this: “In love be tenderly affectioned one to another, in honor preferring one another.”

Next to the affections of the home are the affections that are born and developed in the church. In a happy Christian family, serving one another “in the Lord,” we get the sweetest foretastes of Heaven. But in the church we gain new glimpses, and glimpses that mere kinship cannot

yield. In the church we are met purely on a spiritual basis. Although social forces and intellectual forces modify church development, they do not start nor sustain churches. Churches never should be clubs. They are brotherhoods. Their fellowship is born of a common love to the Master. Now this Christian and church union is an awakener of some of our holiest and most enduring joys. Some persons affect to despise a prayer-meeting. There is often something said or done by some humble soul to jar their refined literary sensibilities! Well, what of it, if speech and prayer and song be genuine, out of a Christ-loving heart? To me it is sweeter than the cold formalities of a dinner-party. When I see Christians sharing each other's joys, bearing each other's burdens, touched by a holy flame of love divine, one in Christ, I see Heaven already here. Have you not won soul

purity, have you not seen God, have you not been in Heaven and had Heaven in you at the simple service of the Supper and Communion of our Blessed Lord?

Then again we come to be very intimate with people whom we never saw. I feel very well acquainted with Plato. Years since I pored over his dialogues till the ideals he paints became part of my very being. David is a man whom of late years I have studied, and loved with a great affection. I know Paul fairly well, and before I die I hope to know him much better. I love Augustine and Luther, Bunyan and Wesley and Edwards, Newman and Muhlenberg, Longfellow and Tennyson, Lowell and Whittier. Were any of these great and good men within my reach this week I would seek to visit him, not out of idle curiosity, not to gratify vanity, but because each of these, as many

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other kindred souls, are my friends and benefactors. I wrote a letter once to each of my two greatest teachers, telling them what their instructions and, above all, their examples had been to me for many years. I would like to tell — if I ever have a chance I will tell, for common gratitude demands it — some or all of these great ones gone whom I have just named, what is in my heart toward them. Now can it be possible that I am never to have that chance? Has such an opportunity been the dream of the ages before Christ, of the wise men apart from Christ, and of all the flocks of the one great fold of Christ, and is it yet but a will-o'-the-wisp?

There are sainted pastors, teachers, and brethren, living and dead, in the church of God, from whom you have learned the deeper things of God's word, or the sweeter delights of Christian service, or the sublimer aspirations of divine worship. You

admire them. You love them. Your souls are knit together, not by the ties of mere earthly companionship, not by the attractions of mere kin or taste. They are knit together by Christ. Through their help, you have seen Christ. May you be sure that you are to see him at last, face to face, and yet are you to doubt if ever again you shall meet them, and commune with them?

There are dear ones to whom you have been related by ties of family and kin. They died in the serene hope of immortality, never doubting Christ's love and care. To one you owe perchance your first thoughts of entering your present vocation, and the blessings that godly prayers brought down from Heaven as the years progressed. He gave you many of your best ideals of Christian manhood. He loved you not merely as a son in the flesh, but, oh, vastly more, as a child of

God. To another you owe any Christian sympathy you may ever have with the needy, the troubled, the poor, the sick. At her knees you learned, as a little child, to look on all men as created by one Father, redeemed by one Saviour, worthy of unvarying service. Such self-denial through long, long years that those she loved might be — famous, or great or prosperous? — no! but *useful* in God's kingdom, you never saw surpassed. Of others you dare not speak. Only eternity can reveal what you learned from them. As years passed, and joys came and sorrows chased them fast, and personal ambitions vanished, and God's better plans unfolded, by divine grace you saw characters ripen, till as in a mirror was reflected the face of your Lord.

I do not expect the restoration of families, as such, in Heaven. The family system, as we here know it, will there, as Jesus

plainly tells, be done away. They do not die, they are not born, in Heaven. They neither marry nor are given in marriage there. But to doubt that sons will meet fathers, and mothers will meet daughters, and husbands will meet wives, and brothers will meet sisters, when on earth their tenderest love has been "in the Lord," is, I think, to suspect that faith, hope, and love are not to abide, that love is to fail, that we are not to be satisfied. As one profound theologian says: "Love itself, the crowning grace of the future as of the present life, will be the ceaseless torment of the holy, if they are never to meet and to know those whom they love. So cruel and so preposterous would such a disappointment be, that our eager affections furnish the answer to their own question." As says Emerson, "We need not fear that we can lose anything by the progress of the soul. The soul may be trusted to the

end. That which is so beautiful and attractive as these relations must be succeeded and supplanted only by what is more beautiful, and so on for ever." As says inspired David: "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." As says the apostle Paul, "Love never faileth." As says our infallible Lord, "Let not your hearts be troubled. . . . Where I am ye shall be also," — yes, with him and with one another.

There are numerous direct intimations of Scripture which greatly strengthen the conviction which I have expressed. Ancient worthies are said to be "gathered unto their fathers," and that a social relation in the other world is meant seems sure, as in several cases the reference cannot be to a common burial-place. It seems as if David cherished such a hope, when he said of his dead child: "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." It was



in form obscure, it may be, yet none the less real, a fairly common hope of the pious in our Lord's time. It seems involved in all Jesus' accounts of future glory. His parables, his prayers, his exhortations, imply that Heaven is a social state. His disciples are to see him in unclouded glory; but their society is not to be exclusively with him. They are to be together; they are to mingle with Abraham, Isaac, and David. This world may be vastly inferior to the heavenly world in Jesus' estimate; but it is not wholly separate from it. The two worlds are linked together. Angels rejoice when sinners repent. Guardian spirits watch over Christ's humblest disciples. Lazarus shares with Abraham a common banquet. Wealth may so be used as to make friends who shall welcome us into eternal tabernacles. In our Father's house are many abiding-places. Where our Lord is his disciples are to be,

with him and with one another. All that is pure and noble and spiritual on earth is to be eternal in Heaven. Nor does it seem possible to read the story of the Transfiguration, in which Jesus, a man in the flesh, Moses a disembodied spirit, and Elijah who had been caught up into Heaven, converse in free speech of earthly events, are recognized by the three disciples, and typify "the communion of the saints," without overpowering convictions such as I have expressed. That there will be such recognitions in Paradise, ere we receive our resurrection bodies, is altogether probable by the law of soul affinity. That when we have our glorious resurrection bodies, perfect mirrors of our redeemed and holy spirits, we shall shine forth for what we are to those who have loved us, and shall be discerned with utter ease by those who wish to see us, is even more credible.

Perhaps it is well that Scripture does not speak more directly than it does on this theme. It is well for us not to be much occupied with it. It is well that we know but in part. It is sometimes necessary to draw our attention utterly away from those we know and love, in order to fix our minds on eternal truths and duties, and to turn our affections toward the supreme God. But that there is enough of proof of recognition in Heaven to fill with well-grounded hope a believing soul, I firmly believe. It must be remembered that the life of the affections, the raptures of holy love, cannot be stated or proved in the terms of a mathematical formula. The kingdom of God is to be measured by no Rule of Three. The purest, holiest Christian consciousness affirms and demands recognition of believing loved ones hereafter, and that consciousness is begotten by the essential principles of the

gospel, and is sustained by varied intimations of God's word.

Here then we are content to leave our hope, knowing to whom we have committed our souls, and awaiting the revelations of that great and better day, when we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known.

The belief which I have depicted is a very sweet and joyous one to the soul that is personally loyal to Jesus Christ. But it is a hope which no one else is justified in entertaining. I may be speaking to some son, or daughter, whose parent not long ago left this world and entered on a higher and eternal service. You loved that parent, and you love him still. He was a Christian such as you admire, and his influence even now almost constrains you to become a child of God. Would n't you like to see that mother again? Would n't you like to hear her speak of her blessed Lord

whom you as yet have refused? Would n't you like to see something of her all through eternity? Will it not be an endless pain always to be separated from her? But separated thus from our believing loved ones we must be, if we do not ally ourselves to their King, and march to glory beneath the banner of their Saviour.

Yes, we desire to know these dear ones, — father, mother, brother, sister, child, wife, husband — in the life and world which are to follow this. I pray God we may. If we fulfil God's conditions, I believe we shall. "This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." That is the adamantine condition of knowing again the sainted ones gone on to God. Have you fulfilled that condition?

O unconverted husband, will you separate yourself forever from your believing

wife? O unbelieving father, will you take another path from that of your believing child? O Christless child, will you refuse to follow in the footsteps of a Christ-loving parent?



### III.

IS HEAVEN A PLACE?





### III.

#### IS HEAVEN A PLACE?

*I go to prepare a place for you. — JOHN xiv. 2.*

HEAVEN is primarily a character, — a pure heart seeing God. But is Heaven also a place? Our Lord might be thought in these words plainly to say “Yes,” if we are always to insist on a strictly literal interpretation of his language. A careful examination of the context, however, will excite a strong doubt as to whether he designs in this language to convey any positive information touching the locality of Heaven. Yet his words do raise the question; possibly they answer it. They may suitably introduce a consideration of the

inquiry which has interested many, and which will occupy our thought this morning.

If you ask a child, Where is Heaven? he will point toward the sky. He would do this at the North Pole, or the South; at New Orleans, or Calcutta; at Cape Town, or the Alaskan Peninsula; at twelve o'clock, mid-day, or twelve o'clock, mid-night. To the child, and to those who still think as the child, Heaven seems thus to be localized very definitely. But a moment's reflection shows that every point of space and matter by which this world is surrounded, the whole extramundane universe of God, is by such a method of designation included in the locality of Heaven.

Hence many, by way of reaction from childhood's fancy, deny that Heaven is local, and affirm that it is purely spiritual, a character and a character only, and not

a place as well. And yet the child, all unwittingly, may be right after all.

The question is more or less speculative, and of relative unimportance, yet allied to it are themes on which Scripture speaks with positiveness, and the mention of these may lead to a larger profit than the inquiry proper might promote.

I. The experiences of Enoch and Elijah suggest that Heaven is a place. These ancient worthies did not die, after the usual manner of men. Of Enoch the account in Genesis says: "And Enoch was not, for God took him." Of Elijah we read in Kings (2 Kings. ii. 11): "And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven." I cannot regard these narratives as mythical, or as merely poetic descriptions of sudden disappearances. They are meant to be historic. They were so understood by the genera-

tions before our Lord. The clear references to other equally extraordinary events of olden time show that they were understood as historic by Jesus himself. Of Enoch the Epistle to the Hebrews says: "Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him." It was as one who had been caught up into Heaven, whose body had become spiritual and glorified, that Elijah appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. The bodies of these translated saints of God may have been, indeed they must have been changed; but they were not annihilated, they were not resolved into their elements of corruption. They endure, first-fruits of that universal glorification in which all Christ's disciples shall be clothed with their immortal bodies. It seems natural to believe, therefore, that Enoch and Elijah are not only in a

heavenly state of inward bliss, but also in a heavenly place of special glory.

II. The impression thus created is greatly strengthened by the narrative of the Ascension of our Lord. Some fairly evangelical critics have questioned the credibility of this account. But it is warp and woof of the Gospel narrative. It was prophesied by Jesus himself, and is often referred to in apostolic discourses and epistles. It is the logical and natural consummation of the Resurrection. In "the rosy dawn of a beautiful spring morning," Jesus gathers his chosen ones in the streets of Jerusalem. Out through the same gate by which he went from the paschal supper to Gethsemane; up the same hill that had been moistened by his bloody sweat; past the same tomb whence he had called forth the sleeping Lazarus, he steps to Olivet's brow. Not as Enoch, unwitnessed and unheralded,

save in a single ancient line, is he to leave the world. Not as Elijah, "stern, awful old man," whose resting place was "the eyrie of the mountain-bird," about whose path "the fierce forest-winds howled, and the lamp of whose feet was the jagged lightning," who, when his conflicts ceased, was fitly rapt away in a whirlwind, and borne aloft in a chariot of fire, — not thus was our Redeemer to rise to Heaven. His life had been gentle, "by the beautiful lake, and on the vine-clad hills, amid blooming valleys and rejoicing birds." And so he lifts up his hands and blesses his disciples; and as he speaks, the morning cloud parts, he rises and passes from their sight, and these hands still outstretched in blessing disappear.

"Thus calmly, slowly did he rise  
Into his native skies,  
His human form dissolved on high  
In his own radiancy."

He rose to Heaven, we say. Where Heaven is we may not know; but that it has locality seems to be involved in the Ascension story. It was our Lord's whole person that ascended, — body, soul, and spirit. It was a visible ascension. The disciples saw it. The glorified, or glory-taking body of the God-man gradually rose from the earth, and went up, until a cloud hid him from view. This was a local transfer of our Lord's person from one place to another, from earth to Heaven. Where Heaven is, we are not, it may be, told; but our Lord's body is either nowhere, everywhere, or somewhere, and where he is, there is Heaven, in the distinctive sense. "It would seem to be the doctrine of Scripture that Heaven — the final abode of bliss, the Father's house of many abiding places — is a definite portion of space where God specially manifests his presence,



and where he is surrounded by his angels, and by the spirits of the just made perfect."

III. The character of the resurrection-body seems to imply the locality of Heaven. There is very much that no one does, nor yet can understand about the body with which we are to be raised. There have been gross, and also ethereal misconceptions of so much as Scripture does reveal. But that the dead in Christ are to rise again is a structural doctrine of Christ and his apostles. Nor is this teaching any declaration of a merely spiritual revival, wherein the soul takes to itself, as in conversion, new life, purposes, and hopes. Nor again is it the mere assurance of immortality, — that in and through and after what we call death, the soul lives on in eternal blessedness. Such views as these will not fill out the outline of apostolic teaching such as is found in 1 Cor. xv.

When our Lord comes again — as come he will, in like manner as he was seen going into Heaven — he will come clothed in that glorious body which he took with him into Heaven, and which in Heaven he still retains. Upon all his faithful disciples he will confer the blessed boon of a new, a resurrection, an immortal, a spiritual body. It will not be like this body, — flesh and blood, and subject to corruption, — though in some unrevealed way it is to grow out of it. It will be, as Paul says, a “spiritual body.”

A great many people read that phrase, and immediately they say, “Why, that means a body made out of spirit.” And so they try to imagine some ethereal, unsubstantial, indefinite somewhat, as being that “building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens” into which, when this earthly house of our bodily frame, this body of death,

the body of our humiliation, shall be dissolved, we are to rise, and in which we, fashioned anew, conformed to the body of Christ's glory, are forever to dwell.

Nothing, however, could be farther from the apostle's thought than this. By a spiritual body he does not mean a body consisting of spirit. That would be nonsense, a flat contradiction in terms, an absolutely impossible reality, and an absolutely inconceivable idea. Spirit and matter are, in all our experience, and in all our thought, opposites. We can first understand Paul's meaning, when we understand his division of human nature. For popular, if not scientific purposes, he divides man into three parts. First there is his body, material, sensuous, corruptible. Next there is his soul, the principle of life, which controls his body, kindred to the life of the brutes that perish. Finally, there is the spirit, the intellectual and

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rational nature, wherewith we apprehend and trust God, — our godlike and immortal part.

Now the body in which we now live is indeed to some extent an organ of the spirit. Our fleshly and corruptible brain in some mysterious way is correlated with all our highest spiritual exercises. But it is an imperfect organ of our spirit. It wearies, it grows old, it decays, it dies. Our present body is distinctively an organ of our lower, or animal part. It is perfectly adapted to the life of the soul.

Paul says "it shall be raised a spiritual body," that is, a body adapted to all the needs of the rational, religious, immortal, God-like spirit, the Greek *pneuma*. And, to confirm his prophecy, he then uses this contrast: "There is a natural body, there is a spiritual body." By "natural body" is meant, as the original Greek plainly shows, a body adapted to the present

order of animal life, a body fitted to the needs of the lower nature, which may be designated the soul, or which in Greek is called the *psuche*. The *psuche*, or soul, is the lower, present, temporary principle of animal life, the seat of all fleshly appetites, passions, pains, and sufferings. There is a body adapted to it, this present natural body, — a *psychical* body. The *pneuma*, or spirit, on the contrary, is the higher, rational, eternal, heaven-born seat of eternal life, the home of faith, and hope, and love, and joy, long-suffering, and peace. There is a body adapted to it, — that house not made with hands, from God; that fadeless, immortal vesture, with which our glorious Lord shall clothe us, when he comes again, — a *pneumatic* body. There is a natural, soul-adapted, psychical body; there is also a spiritual, spirit-adapted, pneumatic body. The one is corruptible, the other is incorruptible;

the one is the servant of dishonor, the other is the minister of glory; the one weakens and dies, the other never tires nor subsides; the one is animal, "natural," psychic; the other is "spiritual," supernatural, pneumatic; the one is for this temporary dispensation of decay, the other is for the eternal economy of heavenly glory.

But, let it be held fast, the body for the spirit, our resurrection body is to be a body. It is to be material. It consists of matter. How its particles are to be organized we do not know. Of all the laws that shall govern its operations, we are not informed; but that such bodies must have locality is a necessity of thought. They cannot be everywhere at once. The Heaven of the risen and immortal saints of God must, at any given moment, be at some definite point, where with their spirit-serving bodies they may be.

IV. It needs, however, to be noted, that the Bible nowhere tells us where Heaven is. Pious men have let fancy picture Heaven and the sphere of its locality. Some ancients placed it in the moon. Others fixed it in the clouds, or in the upper air where the Northern Lights play. Isaac Taylor argues with no little force and ingenuity that the sun may be the Heaven of our planetary system, a globe of immortal blessedness and glory. But all these representations are but pure fancies, without basis of Scripture or reason.

A more plausible theory has urged that this earth is to be the local seat of Heaven. Peter predicts a day, when the heavens shall pass away, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned; as an outcome of which we may look for new

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heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. I have heard men gravely contend that this language is to be understood literally, and proceed to show that Peter was but anticipating the dictum of modern science, which declares that in some far-off æon this world will fall into the sun, and be destroyed, and that then a fresh globe will spring forth, to pass through all the varied history of the countless planets already existing. Perhaps Peter may have wished to be understood literally; but, if so, there is but dim likeness between his prophecies and those of our modern evolution *savans*. But I have no idea that Peter, or John in similar visions, is to be understood literally. They borrow from the language of Jesus, even as he in turn borrowed from the language of the ancient prophets. When Isaiah or Malachi would tell of some great moral and spiritual reforma-



tion which Israel was to witness, — some coming of the Lord in judgment and glory, — as in the Babylonian captivity, or in the Great Restoration, no language is too bold, no figures of speech too dramatic, no possible imagination too vivid for their use. They see the moon as red as blood; they behold the sun blotted from the skies; they witness the whole firmament dropping from its foundations, and all the starry hosts falling into universal chaos; they see the earth consumed by fire, and the eternally holy Jehovah casting the carcasses of the wicked into pits of quenchless flames. There are clouds, and trumpet blasts, and assembling angels. There are volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes, and great inundations. The whole order of material nature is drawn upon for illustration of these sublime truths, overwhelming judgments, and supreme duties with which

holy prophets, inspired of Heaven, desire to impress their fellows. They are no more to be interpreted literally than Milton and Dante, in their sublime visions, are to be taken literally.

I cannot judge, therefore, that we have sufficient authority for pronouncing this earth as destined to be the final seat of Heaven. That man is to grow steadily better, that society is to be redeemed, that spiritually we are to have new heavens and a new earth, where dwelleth righteousness, I fully believe. But that is to result from the progress of mankind under the gospel, as a part of the present dispensation of the Holy Spirit. It has, I take it, no reference to the final state or place of the redeemed, when the present dispensation is closed.

V. In fact the impression which the Scriptures make is that Heaven is to be many-sided, various in its employments,

joys, and localities. There may be some central point in this vast universe where God in Christ is manifested in special glory. But he is not manifested there only. The whole universe is his, and the whole universe, we may imagine, is to be ours. What signifies this vast creation, if it is to charm and incite us for but a few short years? It spreads itself out in an extent that staggers imagination. "There are stars so distant from us that it would take their light, travelling at a rate of nearly twelve million miles a minute, thirty million years to reach us. Our earth is a hundred million miles from the sun, whose diameter is so monstrous that a hundred such orbs as ours strung in a straight line across his disk would scarcely occupy the whole distance. The sun, with all his attendant planets and moons, is sweeping around his own centre at the rate of four thousand miles a

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day; and it would take him eighteen million years to complete one revolution. Our firmamental cluster contains more than twenty million stars. But there are many thousands of such nebulæ visible, some of them capable of packing away in their awful bosoms hundreds of thousands of our galaxies. Measure off the abysmal space into seven hundred thousand stages each a hundred million miles wide, and you reach the nearest fixed stars, — for instance, the constellation of the Lyre. Multiply that inconceivable distance by hundreds of thousands, and still you will discern enormous banks of stars obscurely glittering on the farthest verge of telescopic vision. And even all this is but a little corner of the whole.”

Can it be possible that when God has consummated his redemptive plan he is to shut up his Incarnate Son, his redeemed and glorified children, his spot-

less and radiant angels, all the denizens of Heaven, to any one part of this great and infinite universe which he has made and in such glory sustains? What does Paul mean, when he says, "Creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God"? For what consummation is "the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain together until now"? Have we measured the significance of the promise that in Christ all things, things in the heaven and things in the earth, the totality of the universe, spiritual and material, is to be summed up in one? Have we grasped the meaning of the language: "All things are yours, . . . the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours"? It would rather seem, from such words as these, as if the range of the abode and destiny of those who die in the

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Lord were ultimately to be all immensity! Is Heaven local? Yes; it is not to be severed from material environments, and material bodily conditions. But is Heaven but one sequestered and finite locality? No. To be in Heaven is to have the freedom of God's universe. The child's idea, after all, was not so far astray as at first it seemed. Heaven is always up. It is a where. But it is everywhere. The antipodes, each pointing to the sky above as Heaven's seat, are after all wiser, perhaps, than they dream, for throughout the boundless universe of God Heaven doubtless is to be found. As one writer eloquently says: "The interstellar spaces, which we usually fancy are barren deserts where nonentity reigns, are really filled with a subtle but material ether over which as a royal highway we may move in our spiritual bodies from star to star. They may be the immortal king-

dom colonized by the spirits who since creation have sailed from the mortal shores of all our planets. They may be the crowded aisles of the universal temple trod by bright throngs of worshipping angels. The believer's home, the Heaven of God, may be suffused throughout the material universe." There may be one mansion, but many abiding places; one family, but many branches; one home, but many departments; one blessed Christ, but many Christly blessings; one Father, but unnumbered children; one ruling Spirit, but many Spirit-directed vocations; one worship, but many notes; one Heaven, yet many heavenly places :

" Can every leaf a teeming world contain,  
Can every globule gird a countless race,  
Yet one death-slumber in its dreamless reign  
Clasp all the illumined magnificence of space ?  
Life crowd a grain, — from air's vast realms effaced ?  
The leaf a world, — the firmament a waste ? "

Before the stupendous possibilities of the life to come, we may well bow in solemn question and concern. Am I to have a share in this glorious resurrection life? Am I to have the universal liberty of a redeemed child of God? Is creation mine? And am I God's? Have I a well-grounded heavenly hope? Shall I have a place in Heaven with God and his redeemed?





IV.

THE INAUGURATION OF  
HEAVEN.

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#### IV.

### THE INAUGURATION OF HEAVEN.

*So Christ also . . . shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.*

—HEB. ix. 28.

THE salvation here designated is final salvation. It is not the salvation of first renewal, first forgiveness, first faith, first love,—what is contained in or associated with the Pauline phrase, “justification by faith.” It is glorification,—that consummation of redeeming grace which the Christian believer shall experience on entering the bliss and glory of Heaven.

Heaven is often spoken of as if it immediately succeeded death. In an ac-

commodated, qualified, and certain loose use of the word that is true. The essential thing about Heaven is the vision by a pure heart of a holy and loving God, and so it may in germ exist even in this life. But in the stricter, more accurate use of the word, Heaven does not immediately follow death. Our loved ones who fall asleep in the Lord do not at once go, in the full, strict sense of that word, to Heaven. The penitent thief did not go to Heaven. Paul is not in Heaven. Our recently departed brethren are not in Heaven.

Heaven, in the distinctive sense, describes that final bliss, reward, state, condition, place, and glory, into which we enter when we receive our resurrection bodies in connection with Christ's second coming and the general judgment.

The period and state between death and Heaven are properly designated Para-

dise. It is as in Paradise that we are to think of all our Lord's disciples who have hitherto died in the faith, or who shall die before he comes again in glory. Paradise is a condition of fellowship with Christ. Paul wished to depart, that is, to die, and be with Christ. It is a state of improvement upon our present life, else the apostle would not have craved it. It is a state of rest and blessing in the Lord; they who are in Paradise do rest after their wearisome, fatiguing, and often anxious toils of life. They are conscious. They are in communion with God and one another. God told Moses at the bush, that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And Jesus interpreted the meaning of the declaration when he said, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Jesus gives to his disciples eternal life. Those who believe on him never die. Lazarus

is conscious, active, and happy in the intermediate state. Paul expects to be with Christ, even before the last great day.

But the Bible student cannot fail to notice that this condition, intermediate between death and the resurrection, is one of incompleteness. The saints in Paradise are awaiting a glory not yet theirs, "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. i. 5). It is at the "revelation of Jesus Christ" that their faith is to be found "unto praise and glory and honor." It is then that, in the full, rich sense of the phrase, they are to receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

And close examination makes apparent some of the details of this incompleteness. It may be that at death all remaining bias to sin is graciously removed from the heart of the true be-

liever, though I find this nowhere clearly affirmed in Scripture, or even directly implied. There are even some slight intimations to the contrary. When it is said, for example, that in the Christian dispensation we are come unto the souls of "just men made perfect," the meaning is not necessarily that in Paradise there are now any spirits as yet made absolutely holy, but the meaning is, I take it, that in Christ we come into relations with a system, a spiritual economy, which shall issue in the absolute perfection of redeemed souls. The securing of that perfection may be a part of the work of Paradise. In numerous passages in the New Testament, however, it is affirmed or implied, that a work of development, and sometimes it would almost seem a work of purification, is going on in the intermediate state. In conditions of peace and blessing, in conditions of en-



hanced communion with Christ, as well as of separation from the temptations and taunts of those who love not God, in conditions of quickened spiritual activity, character is enriching, the soul is expanding, the mind is enlarging, the redeemed saint is getting ready for that complete salvation, which is day by day nearer than when we first believed, even the salvation in which we shall become like Christ.

And then, in Paradise the saints are not yet clothed with their resurrection bodies. Emancipated from their natural bodies they surely are; and this is doubtless a gain. Those bodies were of the dust, and to the dust they have returned.

But that perfect organ of the spirit which Paul calls the spiritual body is not yet theirs. The Scriptures uniformly represent the gift of this body as deferred

until our Lord comes again. Paul is very clear on this point. The resurrection is not already past. Hymenaeus and Philetus, in affirming it, were overthrowing the faith of some. The resurrection does not occur at death. The trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, the living shall be changed, they that are Christ's shall receive their glorious resurrection body, at his coming. That to apostolic thought is not an event that has yet occurred. It was not fulfilled at the death of any of Paul's brethren who had fallen asleep in Jesus. Stephen had not attained it. James had not realized it. It was a blessing to come. It was connected with a glorious re-manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, so significant that in union with it somehow the universe was to be transformed, salvation was to be completed, the glorious liberty of the children

of God was to be ushered in, Heaven was to begin!

Thus Heaven, regarded as the final glory of the children of God, begins when our full development in Paradise has been accomplished, when we have received our glorious resurrection bodies, when the awards of the final judgment have been pronounced, when Christ "shall appear a second time, apart from sin [that is, no longer as a sin-bearer, a sufferer, but now as a triumphant King], to them that wait for him, unto salvation." Then shall begin that reign of ceaseless, indescribable, heavenly glory, which the book of Revelation taxes all the riches of oriental imagery to portray, and in which every prophecy of our better nature, every aspiration of heart shall be fulfilled. Then, doubtless, with the universe of God as the field of our activities, we shall enter upon a career of

progress and attainment, which the profoundest philosophy cannot now analyze, and which the strongest imagination is not able to picture. We may move at will throughout the vast universe. We may in direct perception know all the facts of that universe. Memory may be perfect. Mental activity may be incessant. We may be able to carry on many processes of thought at one and the same time. By immediate intuition we may see into the most abstract truth. A perfect language may give us means of exact, infallible utterance. We shall have unbroken communion with God. We shall be tainted with no thought of sin. Pain and sorrow shall have taken their flight. The consummation of that splendid ideal, toward which, from creation's dawn, all the processes of nature, all the developments of history, all the plans of redemption have been pointing, shall be

realized. A spiritual race, in a spiritual body, in a transformed universe, shall fitly represent the highest creative wisdom of the all-glorious God, and be, in very truth and deed, his children, created and perfected in his image. In their glorification shall be seen his glory.

It is our Lord Jesus Christ, then, who, in a personal, visible, and glorious return to earth, when he shall raise the dead and judge the world, is to inaugurate Heaven. When God came to Israel at Sinai, there were thunders, clouds, lightnings, earthquakes, trumpets, cohorts of attending angels. It was doubtless the most awe-inspiring scene ever presented to mortal eyes. Even Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." This inauguration of Jehovah as the peculiar sovereign of the Jews, which occurred at Mt. Sinai, has been made the pattern, in some degree, after which earthly sover-

eigns have ordered the ceremonies of their own coronation. Arrayed in royal vestments, with a brilliant retinue of grandees, and an imposing display of troops, the new sovereign comes forth, with a herald blowing a trumpet before him, and the shouts of the multitude crying, "God save the King." And the people are impressed by the splendor of the pageant. It is natural that in portraying our Lord's return to earth, his presence, his second coming, his revelation of triumphant kingship, the sacred writers should draw upon this imagery. Much of it we know is only figure of speech, the material symbol of spiritual truth. We need not suppose a literal paling of the moon, or dimming of the sun, or falling of the stars, or rolling up of the heavens, or assemblage of angels, or blowing of trumpets, or gathering of clouds. There are numerous intimations

that only spiritual vision will recognize the splendor of the signs and fact of our Lord's return. But that he is to come again, as surely as he came at first; that he is to return visibly, as surely as he ascended visibly; that his second advent is to usher in a glorious heavenly era, the consummation of all the ages past, seems so plainly revealed, that no plea of symbol, or of figure can set it aside. "Why stand ye looking into heaven?" said the angels to the disciples after Christ's ascension. "This Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven." And Peter at Pentecost urges his hearers to repent, in order that God "may send the Christ, who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus; whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things." And Paul tells the Philippians:

“Our commonwealth is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory.” And our text to like effect declares: “So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.”

There are two things that we should heed, when considering our Lord’s coming.

I. No man knows, or can tell when he will come. His “comings” indeed are various, and are so represented in Scripture. He came in the fall of Jerusalem, and the outline of Matthew xxiv.-xxv. was then partly filled in. But no one could fix the date of that Fall. He came at Pentecost, and the prophecies of Joel, and the promises of Jesus at the Last



Supper, were partially fulfilled. But no one knew when the Descent of the Spirit would occur. He came at the Reformation, but while signs of European renewal, now easily discerned after the event, were evident, its exact decade no man could fix. He came in the overthrow of American slavery; he came in the revivals under Wesley, Whitfield, Edwards, Earle, Moody; but no man was wise enough to foretell their exact day. He comes in death, but when our departure is to occur not one of us does or can know. He is to come in a yet greater manifestation, of which all these other comings are but signs, prophecies, suggestions; but no man, nay, not even the angels of Heaven know or can tell the time of that coming. It is not given to us to know the times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority.

When, then, somebody arises who says that he has figured out from Daniel, or Ezekiel, or John, that our blessed Lord is coming to earth again in the year 1895, or 1910, or 2210, I say: Who art thou to assume more knowledge than thy blessed Lord, who himself knew not the day of his return? When somebody asks me: "Have you read Prof. A.'s or Dr. B.'s prophetic articles?" I answer: Prof. A., or Dr. B. is not the first man to say, "Lo, here is the Christ." PHILASTRIUS said Christ would come in 365 A. D.; Hippolytus, in 500 A. D.; Jurieu, in 1785; Bengel, in 1836; Stelling, in 1816; Miller, in 1843; Lander, in 1847; and Totten — is it? in 1890 — something. Have we forgotten the plain warnings of Jesus? Are we to learn nothing from the follies of previous generations? For aught I know, there may be countless spiritual and providential

comings of our Lord ere his last great Advent, or he may come in final glory to-morrow, to-day, this hour. We do not know. We cannot know. We are to be watchful and ever ready. But it is folly to seek to rise above our Christ-described limitations.

II. The expectation of our Lord's return ought to enter as a practical force into our daily lives. There are a great many things about the second coming which the wisest of us cannot settle. Some think the Lord is to return before the millennium. Others think he is to return after the millennium. Some think we are now in the millennium. Others are in a state of suspended judgment. For myself I incline to adopt the post-millennium theory, along with the notion that we are now in the millennium, as the view which seems to me best to harmonize all the facts of

Scripture.<sup>1</sup> I think that "the first resurrection," in Rev. xx. 6, is not a material resurrection but a spiritual revival, — the return of the martyr spirit or the prevalence of the confessor's power, — even as to-day not Pilate but Jesus, not Herod but Peter, not Nero but Paul rules the age. I think that the Scripture teaches that the world is to grow steadily better under the preaching of the gospel, until the kingdom of Christ is so enlarged that Jews as well as Gentiles shall become possessed of its blessings, and a prolonged period is introduced in which Christianity generally shall prevail throughout the earth. And yet, side by side with this increase of righteousness, there is a corresponding development of evil, to culminate in perhaps a personal anti-Christ. This growth of

<sup>1</sup> See Ellicot's Comm. for Eng. readers, note "The Millennium," on Rev. xx.

evil will continue until a time when evil shall be for a time restrained. At the close of this period, however, evil shall again break forth in great power, in its final conflict with righteousness. Then our Lord shall return to earth to settle the strife, to raise the dead, to judge the world, to punish the wicked and to reward the good, and to inaugurate that heavenly era which all his disciples desire. In time, this may be very near, or it may be far away.

It will be noticed, in this suggested outline of the order of events in the last days, that *it is the coming of Christ which is to fix and establish the kingdom of righteousness so that all warfare between the two shall cease, and all enemies shall be put beneath Jesus' feet.* What at last is to become of the wicked may be uncertain. Perhaps, shut up in the confines of their own wretched selves,

they are to sink into an everlasting remorse of conscious woe. So the majority of evangelical scholars have held. Perhaps, disintegrated in soul by their very sin, or abandoned by God, whose sustaining energy is requisite to their endless existence, they are to drop out of the realm of personal identity, and with their sin become at last extinct. So some evangelical scholars think, hoping that at last moral evil is to become extinct, and Christ is literally to sum up all things in heaven and on earth in himself for God; and God is to be all in all. Into all such realms of future things, however, we can see but dimly, and candid Bible students will express themselves with great caution. But, be all this as it may, one thing appears plain; *the supremacy of righteousness, the firm establishment of the developed kingdom of God, the inauguration of Heaven, is conditioned on the*

*second advent, the personal and even visible return, of our Lord.* Amid all the eddies of discussion on this theme, this is the vital truth on which to keep firm hold.

And so it is for this consummation that we should long and pray. Paradise is good, better far no doubt than earth ; but Heaven is our commonwealth ; Heaven is our home ; Heaven is the city toward which as strangers and pilgrims we are journeying. It is in Heaven we are fully to be saved. It is in Heaven we are to receive our complete glorification. It is of Heaven that the sweet descriptions of the Apocalypse are written. It is in Heaven that we are to be like Christ, seeing him as he is. It is in Heaven, through the resurrection body, that recognition of loved ones gone is to be full and secure. It is Heaven which is to be our crown of life, righteousness, and

glory. It is in Heaven that we are to be satisfied.

If then Heaven begins first when Christ comes again ; if Christ's appearance unto full salvation, unto those that wait for him, is, as our text declares, when he comes a second time apart from sin, how ought we, as Peter says, to be "looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God." "When the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away." How ought our longing and hope to be: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

And thus it was in the apostolic church. You can scarcely open your New Testament at any page without seeing one to a dozen references to this hope of Christ's coming. It may have been near, or far, in point of time, but as respects the *feelings and consciousness* of



the early Christians, the second coming of our Lord was always near. To it their thoughts and hopes habitually turned. It was the "blessed hope." With reference to it they lived. For it, whenever it might occur, they labored to be ready. They comprehended the grandeur of that coming occasion. It filled their vision. It inspired their heroism. It awakened their ambition for holiness. In affliction, in temptation, it was their stay. With this great hope they assured their own drooping hearts; and by the certainty of this same solemn advent they warned the wicked of their danger. They exhorted all men everywhere to be prepared for it; for, as a thief in the night, as lightning out of heaven, unexpectedly, suddenly, no man could say when, our Lord should come. Such in substance is Dr. Hackett's picture of "the primitive hope."

What a pity that a motive so constantly adduced, a hope so powerful in its influence upon the apostles, the primitive church of Christ, and many of the saintliest men in all ages, — an expectation that thrilled Paul, John, Peter, and that animates Spurgeon, Muller, Moody, and Pierson, — a power that in the New Testament is fundamental in its effect and appeal with human hearts, is to-day practically ignored! You rarely hear it referred to in Christian conversation. We rarely sing about it in devotional hymns.

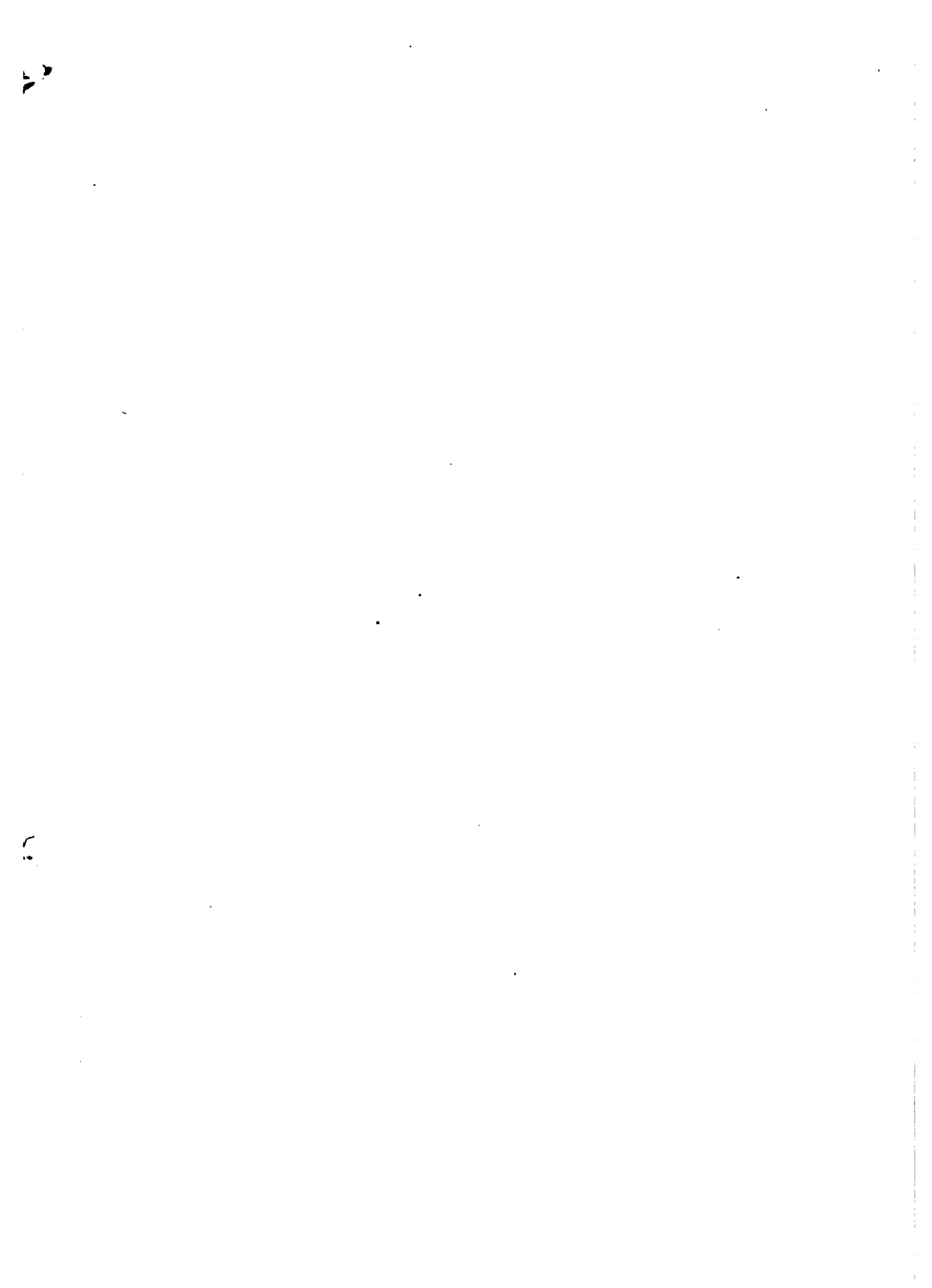
And yet, for one, I am confident that a revival not alone of the primitive faith, but of the primitive hope, is necessary to lift our churches out of worldliness, and bring them into fellowship with those early disciples to whom our text was addressed. For one, I am sure that the revival of its proclamation in our pulpits

would reawaken that sense of sin and peril of eternal death which seems to be escaping the consciousness of modern men.

May the Lord direct our hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ (2 Thess. iii. 5). May he establish our hearts unblameable in holiness . . . at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. iii. 13). Amen.

V.

IS HEAVEN FOR ALL?



## V.

### IS HEAVEN FOR ALL?

*Who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.* — 1. TIM. ii. 4.

*Who shall suffer . . . eternal destruction from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of his might.* — 2 THESS. i. 9.

IS Heaven for all? Are all at last to be won to truth and Christ, and so to inherit eternal, heavenly life? Or are many to reject the mercies of God, become fixed in the love and habit of sin, and so be condemned to their own everlasting reproaches and the added wrath of God? The question is a solemn one; and, if the usual answer be correct, the question is one which we would gladly pass by. But, in any extended teaching concerning Heaven, it is a question that

will not keep silence, and a question to which a Christian teacher should give in all candor such answer as he may have derived from the word of God.

For let it here be noted that it is the Bible, and the Bible only, which is competent to answer our inquiries. Nature has for us no answer. Conscience, and even Christian sentiment can throw but partial light on our theme. To divine revelation we must look for satisfaction, if satisfaction is attainable, and when it speaks we must yield accord, and when it is silent we need expect no answer elsewhere. And in examining Scripture we must survey all its teachings, and seek to give due weight to all its declarations. After years of observation and study I am satisfied that this is rarely done. From such neglect of comprehensive survey has arisen a carelessness touching our destiny, on the one hand,

and an over-despondent gloom concerning mankind, on the other hand.

The Bible contains two classes of passages relative to human destiny, of which our texts, both written by Paul, and in our Bibles separated by but a page, are fair samples.

There is, first of all, a large number of passages, of which the first, obvious, and more natural meaning seems to be that God purposes the final restoration of all men to his favor. They become all the more impressive, when grouped in their proper order. We are told (2 Pet. iii. 9) that the Lord is long-suffering, not slack concerning his promises, counting millenniums but as days, "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," — an assurance which but echoes Jesus' teaching concerning the heart of God, who "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten



Son, that whosoever believeth on him . . . should have eternal life." Paul goes even farther, as in our text, declaring that God "willeth" (that is, if the primary, more natural meaning of the word be retained, is resolved, or determined) "that all men should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth." Hence God sets forth his Son to be a propitiation (Rom. iii. 25), and that not alone for some but for all, "the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). The external ground of salvation being thus provided, there appear on the sacred pages numerous intimations that it is to become inwardly operative on all hearts. Our Lord himself says (John xii. 32): "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself," that is, by my moral, spiritual influence, exerted in view of my death, I will win over to

myself the hearts of all. How much is locked up in that "all" may be doubtful, but perhaps it is *all*. In the accomplishment of this purpose the Spirit is sent to all; he is to convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (John xvi. 8). Christ by his Incarnation became the Son of Man, the head of mankind, the brother of all, and it was as a universal priest, as such a universal head of humanity, that he made propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. ii. 17). He is thus Universal Man, Universal Brother, Universal Sacrifice,—is he to be accepted as Universal Lord? Turning to Philippians, chapter 2, we are met with very remarkable teachings concerning the person and work of Jesus. Nowhere in Scripture is our Saviour's divine humanity so completely and so clearly presented:—

"Who being originally in the form of

God counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, becoming in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."

Within these words is locked up the whole truth of the Incarnation, and the truth of the Atonement. The careful interpretation of these words yields a perfect wealth of knowledge concerning God's past and present dealings with man.

But the language does not stop here. The object of this birth, life, and death of Jesus is next stated: "Wherefore [that is, in view of his humiliation] also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that [that is, in order that, marking the

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divine purpose of Jesus' work] in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things of the world below, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." A candid and critical student of Scripture notices in this declaration of the divine purpose of our Lord's work in the world several details, which are tributary to the discovery of the exact meaning of the passage. First, he notices the phrase "in the name of Jesus," which is equivalent to "in the person of Jesus," which again is equivalent to "in Jesus." This means "in the sphere of Jesus," "in communion or harmony with Jesus;" it naturally means moral and voluntary accord. That is, it means this, unless it departs from its usual, and so far as I can recall, its universal Pauline meaning. Secondly, the "bowing of every knee" naturally

implies adoration, voluntary submission (and though this idea is in Rom. xiv. 11 not necessary to the context, it is not shut out by it). Moreover, the "confession" referred to is, if the usual meaning of the word be here retained, a "glad, open, out-spoken confession of praise and thanksgiving." This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that such is the idea in the original passage in Isaiah, xlv. 23, which Paul appears to have in mind and partly to quote. The entire passage thus appears to teach the universal restoration of all creation to the divine favor as being God's design in Christ.

But is this purpose of the coming of Christ to be fulfilled? Let us examine a further passage of Scripture. At Ephes. i. 9, we read that our salvation is in accordance with an eternal purpose of God. The revelation of God's will (that is, determinative decision) is the revelation

of this object which God set before himself as in Christ to be effected in the fullness of times, viz: "to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth." It is then the decision or decree of God, that all things, all creation, men and angels, shall find at last a living unity in Jesus Christ.

Here, then, we seem to have found expressed a divine desire, a divine plan, and a divine decree, that all men shall be saved; for the accomplishment of which full provision has been made in the perfect life, sacrificial death, and continued intercession of Jesus, as well as in the universal influences of the Holy Spirit, which he sends forth; and so, Paul declares (Rom. v. 18): "As through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life." The "con-

demnation" was as historic as the "trespass;" it seems natural to infer that the "justification of life" is to be as historic as the act of "righteousness." Or again (1 Cor. xv. 22), "As in Adam all die," in body and spirit, "so in Christ shall all be made alive," in spirit and body. And thus is laid the foundation for that magnificent prophecy, v. 25, ff.: "He must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet . . . And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also be subjected [the same word that is used of the Son's opponents] to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all."

I have thus presented the clearest passages which seem to teach that Heaven is ultimately for all. I have not quoted them loosely, but, I have sought to quote them with exegetical exactness, in due regard to the connections in which they appear.

I will frankly say, that, if they were all that Scripture teaches concerning man's ultimate destiny, I should think it sufficiently suggested in God's word, that in the course of the ages all souls are to be restored to holiness and divine favor, all moral beings are to accept and obey the Christ, as Lord, — to justify me in entertaining the universal hope. Such is the first, or more obvious meaning of the Scriptures I have cited. If they were all, universal restoration would be my cheer.

But it needs to be marked that this is not all that God's word declares about our destiny. There are other teachings, more frequent, equally clear, and fearfully impressive, to be found in God's word, which declare that sin leads to death, that men, if continuing in sin, are in danger of that awful punishment described in one of our texts, — "even eternal destruction from



the face of the Lord and the glory of his might."

Words could not be more dread than those which are used. He that believes on Christ shall indeed be saved, but on him who disbelieves the wrath of God abides, and he shall not see life (John iii. 36). To the Pharisees accusing him of being in league with Satan, Jesus declares that they are liable to an "eternal sin," — the sin of blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, — a sin that so involves the perversion of all moral faculty, the obduracy in evil of all moral choice, that in it is no room for repentance, and so for it there can never be forgiveness, either in this world, or in the world to come (Mark iii. 29 and ff.). And with sin is inextricably joined punishment. The wages of sin is death. If there be eternal sin, there must be eternal death. Whenever and wherever sin is, the wrath of God abides on it. He who

like Dives goes into Hades an unforgiven sinner, proud, luxurious, and lustful, shall in Hades reap what he has sown, — thirst, hunger, unsatisfied lust, torment in a lake of fire (Luke xvi. 23-24). If a man deny not himself for Christ's sake, there awaits him Gehenna, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched (Mark ix. *passim*). If men refuse to do deeds of charity to their fellow-men, Christ to them shall say in the judgment hour: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels; . . . and these shall go away into eternal punishment" (Matt. xxv. 41-46). Hear Paul (Rom. ii. 7): "Unto them that obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that worketh evil;" or "Rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of

our Lord Jesus ; who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might " (2 Thess. i. 9). Or read these fearful descriptions of punishment in the book of Revelation : " If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, . . . he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb ; and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever " (Rev. xiv. 11). Or again : and the devil and the beast are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ; " and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever " (Rev. xx. 10).

Oh, my friends, it will not do to dismiss these words as mere figures of speech. Of course they are figures. But they figure something. The symbol must be less fearful than the reality. If a moment since we were lured to prospects of uni-

versal redemption, we are now confronted by a picture of retribution for sin so fearful, so prolonged, that it appears hopeless. "Eternal sin" — "eternal punishment" — "tormented for ever and ever!" This seems to be plain language; and the sense of it seems obvious. It seems to declare that some are to go into hopeless ruin, into an eternity of fixed evil choice, into companionship of demons, false prophets, and base world-powers, there to continue forever under the gnawings of their own remorse, the fires of their own condemning conscience, and the fearful, unending, expressed displeasure of an all-holy God.

This language seems to teach the opposite of what our other group of passages taught. And taken in conjunction with other Scriptures, it seems to teach, not only that Heaven is not for all, but also that of those who reach years of discretion it is but a minority thus far that have

begun that career of spiritual life which shall be consummated in Heaven.

If the vision of a probable restoration of all men was cheering, animating, hopeful, this opposite vision of a race involved, as respects we know not how many of its members, in eternal sin, and eternal pain, and eternal ruin, is cheerless, depressing, full of blank despair. With a frankness as real as I meant to display concerning the Bible doctrine of restitution, I have also sought to outline the first impression of the Bible teaching regarding retribution. And as a result we are landed in seeming contradiction and uncertainty.

Is there any way out? Many declare that there is. Some insist that this second class of passages must give way to the first, that "eternal" does not mean everlasting, — it contains no idea of duration, but only of quality of action; or, if it designates time, it is only "æonian" time, the time

of this age, — and so “for ever and ever” means ages on ages, and, when these are ended, restitution may set in. Others say, the first class of passages must give way to the second; that these first passages only teach us what God wants to do, is willing to do, and has made provision for doing, if man will accept God’s mercy; but we go too far in inferring that God’s desire is actually to be accomplished; that “eternal” is everlasting, and conscious punishment shall last forever, through all the infinite ages of eternity, for those who in this world reject Jesus Christ. Yet, a third class say that both groups of passages require some modification of their first, most obvious meaning ere we can harmonize them. They maintain that such modifications come naturally, unforced, out of the patient, comparative study of these Scriptures. These harmonizers say that the passages foretell-

ing the restitution of all things do involve the absolute extinction of evil, the final annihilation of sin, and the ultimate doing away of conscious punishment in the universe, but perhaps they involve no more; then they add that the punishment "eternal" may be punishment whose consequences are unending, and such punishment may not always be conscious. They think that in the course of æons the wicked will be eaten up by their sin, drop out of existence into an annihilation of ruin beyond reprieve, and then all remaining conscious spirits, being holy, will gather about Christ and proclaim him Lord of all. So God shall be all in all.

Which of these views is correct? Many, perhaps the majority, say the second, that is, the view of strictly everlasting conscious sin and suffering. The hopes and feelings of our generation incline others to the first, that is, the view that

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after ages of ages all shall be gathered back to God. A growing number of scholarly and evangelical interpreters incline to the third, that is, to the belief that the wicked will finally be suffered to drop out of existence, and Christ and his disciples will be left to enjoy the entire universe of God. Which view is correct? I must be frank — as a loyal student of God's word, who has applied himself for years to its examination, and would ever bow in absolute subjection to its clear teaching — I must frankly acknowledge that I think the question unsettled. The difficulties attaching to each view are as yet, in my mind, so great and so numerous that I cannot as a positive conviction accept any one of the three views. With perplexity of mind, and with prayer for light as soon as God may see fit, if at all, to grant it, I deem as yet unsolved, as perhaps in this world insolu-



ble, this great question which has agitated the ages, and upon which many are ready to pronounce a glib opinion, though they may never have given it independent and critical study, nor for a moment weighed the grave significance of an acceptance of any one of the chief historic opinions which I have named. I have studied it, days, nights, months, and years, — critically and prayerfully ; but I cannot say that I think that the Bible teaches the doctrine of absolutely universal final restoration, though in many places it appears so to do. I cannot say that I am absolutely convinced that Scripture teaches the everlasting conscious misery of the wicked, though often it appears as if it does so declare. Neither am I confident that Scripture affirms, or suggests, the opinion that extinction of being is to be the ultimate doom of the incorrigibly wicked, though I incline to think that this, regarded

purely as a hypothesis, is not anti-Scriptural, and may be the more probable tentative view. I am content to leave the question of the final doom of the wicked with a just, holy, and loving God, being absolutely sure that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

Meanwhile, as I read the Bible, I am more and more impressed with the evil, degradation, and horror of sin. It is sin more than punishment that looms in lurid grandeur before my view. It is universal among men. It has driven all souls apart from God. It is the fruitful source of discord, anarchy, ruin. It is so great, so tremendous, that God's own Son alone can put it away, God's own Spirit alone can break its power.

Nor are the punishments of sin doubtful or inadequate. We are to receive our exact deserts. There is no doctrine of death and immediate glory, in the Bible.

There is no doctrine of the unconscious sleep of the soul after death, in the Bible. There is no doctrine of the wicked's immediate annihilation after death, in the Bible. Sin is to be punished, punished justly, punished to the full, punished in this world and punished in the next, punished until all God's purposes in retribution, whatever those purposes may be, have been fully accomplished. Nor can there be any doubt that these retributions are to be of unspeakable dread, and of paralyzing terror. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "Our God is a consuming fire."

As I read these warnings and appeals of God's word, I can find nothing that justifies me in saying to, or in saying of, any man who has once intelligently rejected Christ, that he will have another chance after death. This one warning appears in every appeal of Holy Writ:

“To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.” Every line of Scripture heightens the impression of the awful danger of continuing in impenitence and unbelief. That there are punishments, conscious, prolonged, terrific, unspeakable, in the ages to come for those who turn away from God and his Christ, I cannot for one instant question. While sin lasts, punishment endures; and that sin goes into the other life and long continues there, is plainly written in the Bible.

For one, then, I wish to run no risks. I wish no friend of mine to run any risks. I wish no son of man to run any risks. I wish to cry aloud, — “ Danger! Danger! Danger!” — to all who walk in the ways of sin. I wish to turn men, all lands through, away from sin and wrath. I wish to get Heaven into men’s hearts, here, and then there will be no concern about the Heaven hereafter. I wish to

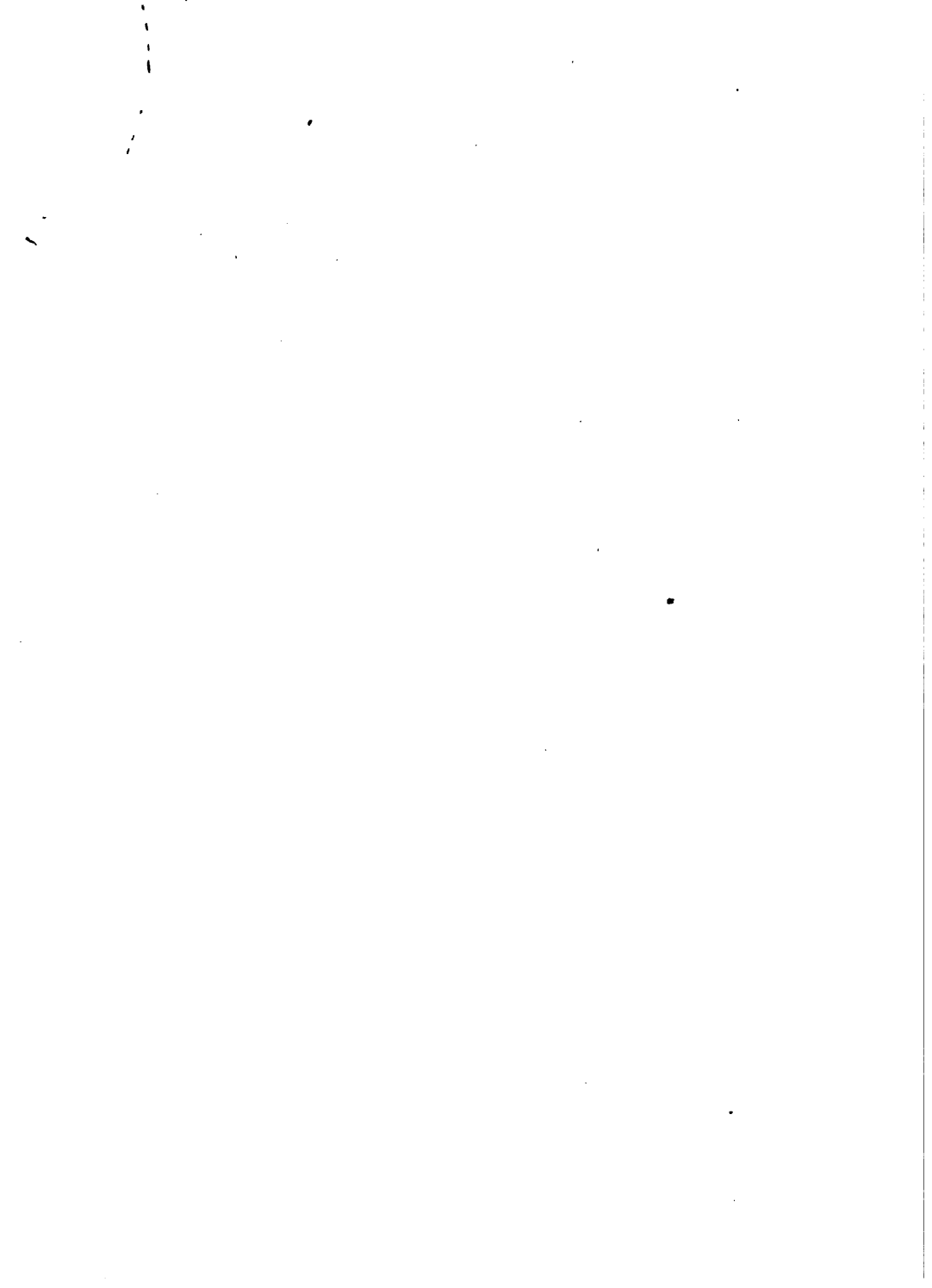
get hell out of men's hearts here, and then we need fear no hell for them hereafter.

My friend, whom are you serving to-day? Self or Christ? Mammon or God? Sin or righteousness? So long as you serve self and mammon and sin, and thus refuse Christ and God and righteousness, the divine disfavor rests upon you; you are without hope and without God in the world. The only right thing to do is to repent now. He is a thief who lingers in sin, for he robs God of time and service which are God's due. The only safe thing is to accept Christ now, for he takes a leap into the dark who goes hence unforgiven and unrenewed.

The search-lights of God are now casting all their solemn glory on you. What manner of man or woman art thou? Lost or found? It is a law, as fixed and unbending as God himself: AS THY AFFINITY, SO THY DESTINY!

VI.

THE WAY TO HEAVEN.



## VI.

### THE WAY TO HEAVEN.

*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father but by me.*—JOHN xiv. 6.

THERE is a ring of certainty about these words that is assuring. There are many things about Heaven concerning which we have no clear or detailed revelation. To some of these things I have referred in recent discourses. But concerning the way to Heaven, as to how to get to Heaven, there is no shadow of doubt. It is as clearly defined, and as distinctly visible, as is the outline of one of our mountains on one of our fairest days.

The fourteenth chapter of John was not as intelligible to those who first



heard its words of comfort as it is to us. It was so difficult for those first disciples to grasp the idea that Christ's kingdom was not to be a temporal kingdom, that his predictions of going to the Father, of preparing places for them, of coming and taking them to the place where he was, were more or less perplexing to them. Where was he going? How could they journey thither? Thomas expressed his companions' uncertainty, as well as his own, in the words: "We know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?" And our Lord answers in clearest notes: "I am going to God, my Father, your Father, the Father. To be in loving and obedient companionship with him is Heaven. For not in Heaven are we to find God; but in God are we to find Heaven. Thither is my journey; and the way ye ought to know. But once for all to make it clear, I will again point out

the path to that heavenly glory, which, all who will may share ; I am the way, and the truth, and the life ; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me."

An ordinary man, however holy or wise, can but point out the way, or the truth, or the life. Jesus is no ordinary man. He is at once the Son of Man and the Son of God. He is the way, and the truth, and the life ; by him is access to God and Heaven.

That the highway between earth and Heaven, man and God, has been either obstructed or destroyed, the consciousness of the race attests. The Lord God called out to fallen Adam, "Where art thou?" and the voice came to a guilty, conscience-stricken pair, hiding in their shame among the trees of the garden. What a picture is that of us all ! We know we are sinful, conscience tells us we have done wrong and are in disfavor,

and we are trying to hide from God. O for some way out of our sin and guilt ; O for some peace of conscience and some spirit of confidence ; O for access once more to God ; O that this chasm between us and our Maker, between earth and Heaven might be bridged ; O for a way to the Father !

It is precisely Jesus Christ who bridges that chasm. Stricken consciences slay and burn great hecatombs, "the which," however, "can never take away sins." Heavy hearts invent penances, pilgrimages, religious ceremonies ; no one nor all of which, however, "can make perfect them that draw nigh."

The simple fact is, man cannot bridge the chasm. He is like a general who has burned his bridges behind him, knowing that on the other side of the rushing river are the timber and stone wherewith to build a causeway. Some one else

must construct bridges, if ever with his armies he is to return. Man by sin has cut the cord that unites him to God. The only way of return would be by undoing all his evil past, and never doing evil henceforth. To neither of these achievements is he equal. He cannot pull God down to himself. The process must be the reverse of this. God must lift man up to himself.

Now Jesus Christ is Heaven's approach to wayward, sinful, guilty man. He is God's declaration of continued love. He is God's evidence of unchanging holiness. He is God's manifestation of unyielding justice. He is God's magnifying of unimpeachable, heavenly law. He is God's word to inquiring man. In the person and ministry of Jesus Christ God himself takes the initiative in human recovery. He says to his guilty and condemned children: "You need query no

longer as to whether I will again receive you. Behold my son ! You need doubt no longer whether there is any adequate sacrifice for sin. He is the propitiation for your sins. You need ask no longer, if I can pardon a penitent sinner, without violating the obligations I sustain to perfect, righteous law. He is set forth, the just for the unjust, to show forth my righteousness ! You need doubt no longer if there is access to God, and peace with the Father. Through the Lord Christ is peace with God ; through him also there is access by faith into the favor of Heaven. In Christ you may rejoice in hope of the glory of God ! ”

I suppose no one listening to my words is wholly indifferent to this question of how to get to Heaven. We know we are in a far country. We are not, in a world of selfishness and reproach, in our true Fatherland. Heaven is our Fatherland

But we are like a Swiss mountaineer, who despite the glory of his native canton, has wandered from home, and sick at heart for the sight of his dear Alps, has no way of getting back. He is on another continent than his own. Great oceans separate him from snow-capped Blanc, and there is no ship to take him back. Rivers wide and deep are between the western shore of Europe and his own chalet; their bridges have been swept away, and he cannot rebuild them. The highways are closed, the towns are walled and gated against him. He is away from Home, a man without a Country, and there is no way back to Fatherland.

Yes, no ship that man can frame, no bridge that man can build, no causeway that man can open, no gates that man can unlock can make a highway back to the God we have left, and the Heaven we have deserted. It is necessary that God

build that ship, that God construct that bridge, that God open those gates and uplift that causeway. And this he has done in Jesus Christ. He is the Mediator between man and God. He is God's loving provision for meeting all the requirements of his just and holy law. He is the way over which in penitence and faith we may go back to God and Heaven.

Thus he becomes to us also the truth. Being God's provision for our salvation, an external, objective, though ethical ground for our faith, he is necessarily also a perfect Revelation of the character and purpose of God, the nature and destiny of man, the conditions and blessings of eternal life. He alone leads to the Father. It is a significant fact that outside of Jesus' teachings you find no adequate presentation of the divine Fatherhood, the full and glad realization of which is the very essence of Heaven. A

few of the ancient poets, and some of the old philosophers exhibit traces of the doctrine ; but they scarcely rise above the idea that Fatherhood consists of Creatorship. The Old Testament often gives glimpses of the truth. But in Christ's discourses and life for the first time rose the full glory of this revelation on men. Jesus not only taught that God is our Father, and that the way back to God and Heaven is to rise to a realization of our sonship, but what is inconceivably more, Jesus exhibited the truth in his own character. When you hear what Jesus says, you hear what God would say under like circumstances. When you note what Jesus feels in the face of suffering, or death, or disease, or infirmity, or cruelty, or crime, or hypocrisy, you note precisely what God, the Father, feels, as he sees these evils. When you mark what Jesus does for the removal of sick-



ness, sin, sorrow, and tyranny, you see in him the exact mind, purpose, will, and operation of God himself. Thus we know the Father not by mere abstract teachings about the Father. We know the Father by specific and countless exhibitions of what the Father is, wills, and does, as afforded in the ministry of God's Son. Therefore Jesus said : "I am the truth." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

But to get back to God, it is not only requisite to be assured that all external obstacles are removed, that the Father can and will receive me, if I but come ; it is not only necessary to see the Father in spirit and truth, to mark distinctly the heavenly goal toward which I should journey ; it is also necessary to have the inward impulse, the spiritual energy, the living purpose, to start on our Heavenward journey. We need the way, we

need the truth; but even more we need the life. And it is herein that the supreme evidence of our Lord's divine Sonship appears. It is said that a man fell into a deep pit from which he could not unaided escape. It was all dark and helpless with him. It chanced that Confucius passed by and heard his cries. Stepping to the pit's edge he said: "Well, you are in a sorry plight. You were a careless man. Let me give you some good advice,—when you get out of this peril, be careful not to fall into this hole again!" Then Buddha chanced to pass by, who, hearing the man's groans, with tender feeling said: "Yes, you are in a poor fix. Can I get you out? The only way out is virtually to stay in. Close your eyes to the twinkling stars above. Cease reaching after some root or ledge, by which to lift yourself up. Be still. Drink a little, now and then, of the mias-

matic waters that trickle by your feet. Forget, and lapse, and give up willing, and soon you will be no more a conscious person, but reabsorbed into the impersonal will-less All." Then Moses, noble soul, chanced that way. When he saw his brother's distress, he knelt before the pit, he stretched down his stout arm, and he said: "Now, friend, take hold of my true hand, and I will lift you up." But, alas, as the poor imprisoned man lifted up his hand there was a long distance betwixt it and his helper. If he could have grasped the great legislator's hand, and held it, he could have come to light and life; but reach it or hold it he could not. And, last of all, blessed hour! the Lord Christ came that way. He had heard the cry of distress, and was making straight for its source. With tearful eye he saw all and planned the rescue. He slowly lowered a strong

ladder into the gloomy pit, and then descended on it to the pit's very depths. He spoke a word of cheer, he gave a portion of celestial elixir. He took the pit-fallen, exhausted man upon his own strong shoulders, and mounting the golden rounds, brought his helpless brother to light, life, and hope. That is Jesus Christ always. He does not merely advise. He does not point out a course and give partial, yet, because partial, unavailing help. He comes down into the very heart of our sin and sorrow. He bears our sins. He carries our sorrows. He is tempted in all points as are we. And then giving us of his own divine life he brings us up to God. He actually starts us toward Heaven; he accompanies us all the way through life to Heaven. The Christ life in the soul is eternal life. He who has it will have Heaven. He is the way, and the truth? Yes. But more: he is the life.

There are some lessons growing out of our Lord's relation to the heavenly journey which I wish to emphasize.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is not merely a way, he is the only way to Heaven. He has made a sufficient sacrifice for sin. No one else ever has made or can make that. He has perfectly revealed the Father; no one before him or apart from him has done that. He awakens in the soul a holy energy, a divine love, a determined enthusiasm, which starts it in successful quest of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. No one else does that. Plato, after a rapt vision of better things for man and earth, says: "But we must await the advent of some divine man ere we can secure their worth." That divine man has come in the person of Jesus Christ. Augustine says that the beautiful ideals of heathen poets and sages were beyond his reach till one from

above renewed his soul. That one who changed his heart was Christ our life. If Socrates and Plato and Aurelius are in Paradise and shall yet reach Heaven, it will be only through Christ. In view of his sacrifice it is that God can forgive and restore justly any sinful soul. If these ancient sages were lovingly loyal to the best ideals they knew, it was because they yielded to that light "which lighteth every man, as he cometh into the world," and that light became way, truth, and life in the person of Jesus Christ. If there are any godly heathen in pagan lands to-day, who on coming before God will be acceptable before him as was righteous Cornelius, it will be in view of the fact that their hearts are so open that when once the Christ is offered to them, they will like that same Cornelius, accept him as their hearts' desire. If any in Christian lands, like Emerson

or Mills or Montefiore, who have been unable to accept historic Christianity, are yet saved at last, it will be through Christ's atoning sacrifice, and because in their hearts, if not their heads, they were loyal to the essential Christ, and, when all mists are cleared away, will with mind as well as heart be able to receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord. If little children at death pass to Jesus' arms, it is that Jesus' death is accepted for them, and because their youthful minds are renewed so as eternally to choose him as their redeeming Master. And if one of us, to whom Christ has been preached, by whom Christ is admitted to be what he professes to be, and with whom Christ's Spirit, it may be again and again, has striven, is permitted to enter the heavenly glory, it will be for the reason that such a one accepted Christ, not in any dogmatic, theologic sense, but in a profound.

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practical, spiritual sense, as his personal, peculiar Lord and Saviour. There are but two ways to Heaven,—by a perfect character, or by a perfect Saviour. No mortal man has a perfect character. Hence there is none other name than Jesus Christ given among men whereby we must be saved. Our Lord in our text lays grave emphasis upon the pronouns. “I—and I only—am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father but by me.” My friend, if you are relying on any hope whatsoever, be it of culture, or of character, or of knowledge, or of good intentions; if you are relying upon any hope save the mercy of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, for a dwelling-place in Heaven, then is your reliance and your hope a delusive hope, and your future a dark, cheerless, and God-less future. You are building on sand and not on rock, save as you are



rearing a character on the foundation of obedience to Jesus Christ.

“Thou art my Saviour! there is none  
But thee on whom I dare rely :  
For thee, O Christ, 'tis mine to live,  
In thee my joy shall be to die.”

I am impressed, in bringing to a close this series of discourses on Heaven, with the thought that it is not enough to desire Heaven. For six mornings we have been noting together some of the aspects of the heavenly life. I cannot believe that any of us have been wholly unmoved in view of the truths and attractions that we have been led to examine. Down in our hearts, at any rate, in our better moments, we would like to be in harmony with God. Not one of us wishes to be forever the companion of evil spirits, or even for unnamed ages to be shut out from God's presence, or to be so total a failure before man and God as to sink into corruption

so great as to involve at last the extinction of our conscious being. We would all like to succeed; we would all like to realize the end of our creation; we would all like to associate again with the saintly spirits whom we have known and loved on earth. Ah yes, we would like! But that may have very little to do with the matter. The question is, are we resolved to journey Heavenward? How long have some of you been saying: "I would like to be a Christian, I would like to have a heavenly hope"? Some of you may have been saying that for twenty or thirty years, and yet to-day may be farther from the realization of your desire, — at any rate no nearer to it, — than you were those years ago. It is less a question of desiring than it is of starting. To reach Heaven start for Heaven!

For what if, after all the teaching and exhortation we may have heard, we

should be shut out of Heaven at last? Spurgeon tells the story of an old minister near whom he lived when a boy, who used to go from his own preaching service every month to the immediately following communion service of a neighboring church. During this observance of the Supper, it was customary to shut the gates of the chapel to prevent any disturbance through persons going out or coming in. On one occasion the burden of the Lord pressed upon the venerable preacher with more than ordinary severity, his discourse was lengthened, and he had to hurry to the chapel. As he drew near he noticed the doorkeeper retire from the outer gate, after having shut it. He called to him, but was not heard. He quickened his pace to another entrance; but it was too late. The minister came up "just in time" to see the door put to, and be himself shut out! He heard the

singing within and longed to join in it. He called up in imagination the sweet communion of saints there in progress, but he could not then share in it. And the lad Spurgeon as he saw it all said: "And how shall it be with me? Shall I come up to the gate of Heaven only in time to be too late, to find the door forever shut?" And the man Spurgeon with power unsurpassed used often to turn to his hearers, as I would turn to each of you, and say: "Will you stop with merely wishing to go to Heaven? Or will you not now receive Jesus Christ as your Way, your Truth, and your Life; your Sacrifice, your Prophet, and your King, and make an actual start for Heaven?"

Some of you, I believe, have of late been pricked in conscience, or touched in heart, or stirred with apprehension, and have felt Jesus' spirit struggling with

you. To some of you Jesus of Nazareth  
is consciously this hour "passing by."

"Ho ! all ye heavy laden, come !  
Here's pardon, comfort, rest, and home ;  
Ye wanderers from a Father's face,  
Return, accept his proffered grace.  
Ye tempted ones, there's refuge nigh.  
' Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.'

" But if you still this call refuse,  
And all his wondrous love abuse,  
Soon will he sadly from you turn,  
Your bitter prayer for entrance spurn, —  
'Too late ! too late !' will be the cry,  
' Jesus of Nazareth HAS PASSED BY.' "

RICHARD MONTAGUE.



**A Tribute.**

By REV. ALVAH HOVEY, D.D., LL.D.



## RICHARD MONTAGUE.

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### A TRIBUTE.<sup>1</sup>

**S**INCE last Wednesday the words, "Be still, and know that I am God," have been often in my thoughts. Not, of course, for the first time, but with more than usual frequency. For the mysteries of life are too dark to be long absent from the mind of any thoughtful Christian, and a message like this from the Father of lights is too full of peace to be long forgotten. If we lift up our eyes and survey the great harvest field, with but scattered groups of laborers in all its vast extent, we may ask ourselves in vain, why so many of these laborers are called away from the field while the sun of their working day has scarcely reached its zenith? But if we listen for it, a quieting voice will come from the Allwise, saying, "Be still, and know that I am God." "What thou

<sup>1</sup> Given at the funeral service, July 27, 1895.



knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter; " and the message will give us peace.

Yet our own reason, however feeble, does not fail to remind us of a partial explanation of the mystery involved in the taking away of good men "in the midst of their days." A human life may be short, if measured by one standard of duration, and long, if measured by another; short, if measured by the procession of the stars, but long, if measured by "the work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope;" short, if measured by the flight of seasons, but long, if measured by difficulties overcome, results achieved, and sufferings endured. "That life is long which answers life's great end." From the very highest point of view, that life is consummate and glorious which can be closed with the words, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In such a case, whether the years of service have been few or many, there is no mystery so long as we confine our thoughts to the workman who is called to his reward: the only cloud that our eyes can see rests upon the great harvest, still ungathered.

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Though I must have met with Dr. Montague when he was but a lad in his father's house at Westboro', my acquaintance with him began when he entered our Institution, eighteen years ago. He was then in the prime of early manhood, twenty-four years old, a graduate of Harvard, and a student during one year of Harvard Divinity School. His bearing was courteous and unassuming, his countenance open and engaging, his words distinct and well chosen, his devotion to study manifest and absorbing, and his Christian activity cheerful and earnest. The class which he joined had in it such men as Professors Charles R. Brown, Albion W. Small, Rev. Geo. E. Horr, Jr., and Rev. Edmund F. Merriam, with others of marked ability; and to have been the acknowledged peer of students like these was a pledge of success in the high calling to which he had devoted his life. I do not imagine that he was free from ambition; few able men are; but his ambition was suffused with kindness and transfigured by love to Christ.

Before leaving the Seminary he was known to many of the churches. His personality, his manner in the pulpit, and the quality of his

thought made him a favorite. The common people heard him gladly, and his services were no less acceptable to the educated and the refined. When his course at Newton was finished, he was called at about the same time to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church in Lawrence, and to the Central Baptist Church in Providence. It was no easy matter to determine which of these calls ought to be accepted. But he decided in favor of the one to Lawrence, in part, I believe, because it was a smaller church than the other, and on that account less likely to overtax his strength. His ministry in Lawrence was successful, and the hearts of his people clung to him with strong affection. He was unwilling to leave them in response to a call from this church, which at that time was anxious to make him its pastor.

But after two years his friends in Providence, being again left without a pastor, renewed their call with such urgency that he heard in it the voice of God, and removed to that place. There, in a larger city and church, his services were in constant demand, and his energies taxed to the utmost. His ideals of church

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work were high, and he was content to be nothing less than a leader of the band. He longed for the growth of all in knowledge and love. He wished to see progress in every direction, especially in the upbuilding of men in truth and righteousness. And he tried to respond, with all the vigor and generosity of a noble spirit, to the ever-multiplying calls for public speech which are heaped upon one whom thousands in a large city delight to hear.

Dr. Montague was invited while pastor of the Central Church in Providence to the chair of New Testament interpretation on the Hill, and the work was one that had special attractions to his mind; but the ties which bound him to his people were too strong to be severed. Yet he had not the physical strength of an athlete, and so it came to pass, as some had feared, that he was ere long stricken with disease and compelled to flee for his life to Colorado Springs. After a year of rest, he was made pastor of the Baptist church in that place, serving it with wonderful courage and usefulness during a period of six years. Then, assured by the ablest medical counsel that the

climate of Colorado would render him no further assistance, and that he might expect to work as long in the East as in any other part of our land, he accepted the invitation of this church to be its pastor,—explaining at the same time the limitations of which he was conscious, and engaging to do only such an amount of work as his health would permit. And we have all been witnesses of the marvellous resolution with which he fulfilled every jot and tittle of this engagement. We have all listened with deep joy and great profit to his preaching. We have often felt, as he expounded the word of God and urged us to holy effort, that his appeals were fresh from the heart of Christ, and have almost expected to see his face shine as if he had come to us from the presence of his Lord. And in a very real sense, I suppose that it was even so. It is not too much to say that his words seemed oftentimes to “ring out” from “crystal spheres,” as clear and pure as if uttered by an angel. He came before us as one who was already looking into the faces of the just made perfect, quite as frequently as into the upturned faces of his congregation.

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In looking back over the life of Dr. Montague since he entered the Seminary, I can only think of him as a man of rare personal worth. And I embrace in the idea of personal worth such qualities as moral courage, fairness of mind, purity of heart, and sincerity of speech. These are cardinal virtues. One who possesses them is fit to be a prince of men. But one who does not may indeed be polite and agreeable, enthusiastic and entertaining, but he lacks the qualities of safe leadership.

I think of Dr. Montague as being also a man of superior attainments. His training in literature and philosophy was thorough. His mind was regulated by discipline, enlarged by study, and filled with truth. He understood music and loved the beauty of art as well as of nature. He was at home with the best English writers, and master of several languages ancient and modern. The voice was an instrument which he had learned to use with the greatest ease and effect, or the last years of his ministry would have been a failure. Thus natural powers of a high order, and moral qualities of intrinsic worth, were improved by years of patient toil, before he entered on the duties

of public life; and the results of this were constantly seen in the lucid clearness of his language and the solid merit of his thought.

Still more, I think of our sainted Montague as a man of God, who had been anointed for his work by the Holy Spirit. When he came to serve us in the ministry of Christ, he had been chastened by suffering, and had learned, as perhaps few of us know it, the tender Fatherhood of God. The grace which imparts strength to weakness and brings joy out of pain, was at home in his soul. Nature and the Bible were glorified in his eyes by that grace. He loved his work, because he loved mankind with a brother's love, and believed with all his heart, that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Yet he was hospitable to new phases of truth, and ready, down to the last weeks of life, to open every window of his mind to fresh light from the other side. But it must be light, and not darkness, and therefore it could not weaken his confidence in the written word. His faith was immovable, and much of the time, during the last few weeks, his peace was like a river.

More than this, I think of Dr. Montague — whose name is an ointment poured forth, filling all the air with its fragrance — as a preacher of rare excellence. The action of his mind was swift and strong. The words which he employed were made for his thought, and came to him as “nimble servitors” in answer to his slightest call. The functions of memory and imagination were finely blended in his statements of truth. The tones of his voice were far-reaching and agreeable. The changes of his countenance were expressive of sentiment and emotion, and his attitude in the pulpit was unconstrained and manly. I can see his benignant smile when he spoke to us of the love of God. I can recall his wonderful tact in setting before us a neglected duty, or a service that Christ would be pleased to have us render. With his singing robes upon him, he would sometimes rise toward the sun, like the skylark addressed by the poet: —

“Higher still and higher  
From the earth thou springest,  
Like a cloud of fire  
The blue deep thou wingest,  
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.”



But, after all, the charm of Dr. Montague's preaching was in the everlasting gospel which it announced. Without that, all possible felicities of manner would have failed to make it a savor of life unto life. But with it, and by means of it he laid foundations of character, that will abide though the rains descend and the floods come and the winds blow. His work with this people will not perish. His work in other places will bear fruit for ages to come. The work of those that sow to the Spirit is immortal. They may pass away, but their influence will remain. Yes, the life of our beloved brother was a long life, when measured by spiritual chronometers, and estimated by thought and purpose, by heroic endurance and unflagging devotion till the sands of life were out.

“Servant of God, well done !  
Rest from thy loved employ ;  
The battle fought, the victory won,  
Enter thy Master's joy !”











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